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CONSTRUCTIVE BIBLE STUDIES

EDITED BY

ERNEST D. BURTON

OLD TESTAMENT STORY

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OLD TESTAMENT STORY

A MANUAL FOR TEACHERS OF YOUNG STUDENTS

By

CHARLES H. CORBETT

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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INTRODUCTION

The chapters contained in this volume are intended to guide the teacher in the presentation of a continued story of the Israelites, from the exodus to the death of Solomon. It is understood that students using this book have already studied the biblical stories in disconnected form, but have now arrived at a point where a continued story is more interesting to them than stories selected without reference to their relation to each other.

Events are recorded in the historical books of the Bible, which in themselves would be commonplace, but which, taken in connection with the lives of the great moral leaders of the Hebrew people, acquire religious value because they serve as a background against which these important characters stand out with a vividness not otherwise obtainable. Therefore the subjects in this book have not been chosen because of their immediate ethical application, but rather on account of their importance in the picture as a whole. Suggestions are made, however, at the end of each lesson as to ethical and religious values to which the story might contribute. The most valuable ethical lessons will be found in the correlation of the stories with situations of modern life, in which similar moral problems arise. But since many of these relationships

may be local and peculiar to the environment of the pupil, they can best be worked out by the teacher.

There are no stories which appeal more strongly to the interest of the child than the Bible stories when rightly presented. The element of interest is greatly emphasized in modern education, and from this point of view, it is hoped that the course will make a strong appeal. In the presentation of the subject as a connected whole, progress from one stage to another is easily discerned. It has seemed wise to give considerable attention to manners and customs, and to the ideas and superstitions of the people, in order that the pupils may acquire a vivid conception of the life of the people and a sense of the reality of the events which they are studying.

Since modern scholarship has contributed much to the restoration of this historical background, it may be that teachers who have not thoroughly studied the subject may find ideas new to them, and perhaps less acceptable than their old views. Such teachers are particularly urged to cultivate frankness and consistency in dealing with the children. To erase difficult questions, and to defend for dogmatic reasons that which the pupil feels to be indefensible, have disastrous results. No teacher should be afraid to say, "I do not know." Neither is it necessary to defend the falsehoods of the ancient Hebrews, or to represent

as model characters all of the persons who appear in the biblical story, simply because they are mentioned in the Bible. The average pupil is much more acute than he is usually supposed to be. He is also more reasonable than people imagine. If a teacher will be frank, explain the questions as far as possible, confess ignorance when it ought to be confessed, but let the pupil understand that there is nothing to conceal, and that God really wants him to know the truth, his confidence will be won and held.

Manual work is provided in the Notebook which accompanies this course. This may sometimes be an introduction to the lesson; sometimes an outgrowth from it, according to the judgment of the teacher. The principle should never be forgotten that handwork is not mere amusement, but rather an opportunity for the pupil to express the ideas and conceptions which have come to him during his study of the subject. As much variety as possible has been given to the manual work. It includes pictures to be studied, colored maps of various kinds, and models to be made from paper. Some classes may wish to do even more of this work than is thus supplied, such as the construction of models and maps from clay or pulp. The amount and character of the manual work must depend upon the time which the teacher is privileged to have with the pupils.

The place of this book in the curriculum is purposely left flexible. There is a sufficient amount of material in the volume to enable a teacher to treat the subject quite thoroughly with classes of boys thirteen or fourteen years of age. For such as these, it may be wise to increase the difficulty of the notebook work in connection with certain of the lessons. On the other hand, the notebook work may be reduced in difficulty and the material of the story presented in a more simple way, the course being thus adapted to somewhat younger children. No course should be followed slavishly, but always with the capacities of the particular class in mind. Generally speaking, a course with manual work should be adopted with boys and girls who are still in the restless period, and are not yet ready to discuss problems of an ethical and religious character.

Each teacher should be supplied with a teacher's manual and a pupil's notebook and should also *do the work indicated* before attempting to direct a class. Notebooks are to be given to the pupils as the work proceeds, a page at a time. Teachers will find it convenient to sort the leaflets and pictures at the beginning, placing the supply of the entire class for each successive lesson together. It is well to provide a place where this material and the crayons may be kept.

The most effective work is done when the pupils are allowed to take their notebooks home, but *this should not be permitted until* they have been trained to care for them, and home co-operation has been secured, so that the books will be available for use each Sunday.

Although the course does not indicate definite home study, the pupils should be held responsible for a review of the previous lesson, and encouraged to think through to a conclusion questions under discussion. Such questions should always be suggested in connection with the advance work and later opportunity given for an expression of opinion if further thinking has been done.

It is important to remember that the test of any educational process is not what the child *knows*, or what he is *able to say*, but what *he has become*, and to make every moment of class association a training in reliability, promptness, and friendly co-operation—in short a genuine growth in character.

This series of lessons was first prepared for the Bible school of the Church of the Son of Man, on the upper east side of New York City. It was used in that school, not only by children, but also by young people of limited education and with almost no foundation for biblical work. In the hands of the author, who has since entered upon educational work under missionary auspices in China, the

interest was great, and it is hoped that through a study of *Old Testament Story* many boys and girls will gain a larger conception of God, and a deeper interest in the people through whom has come his greatest revelation to the world.

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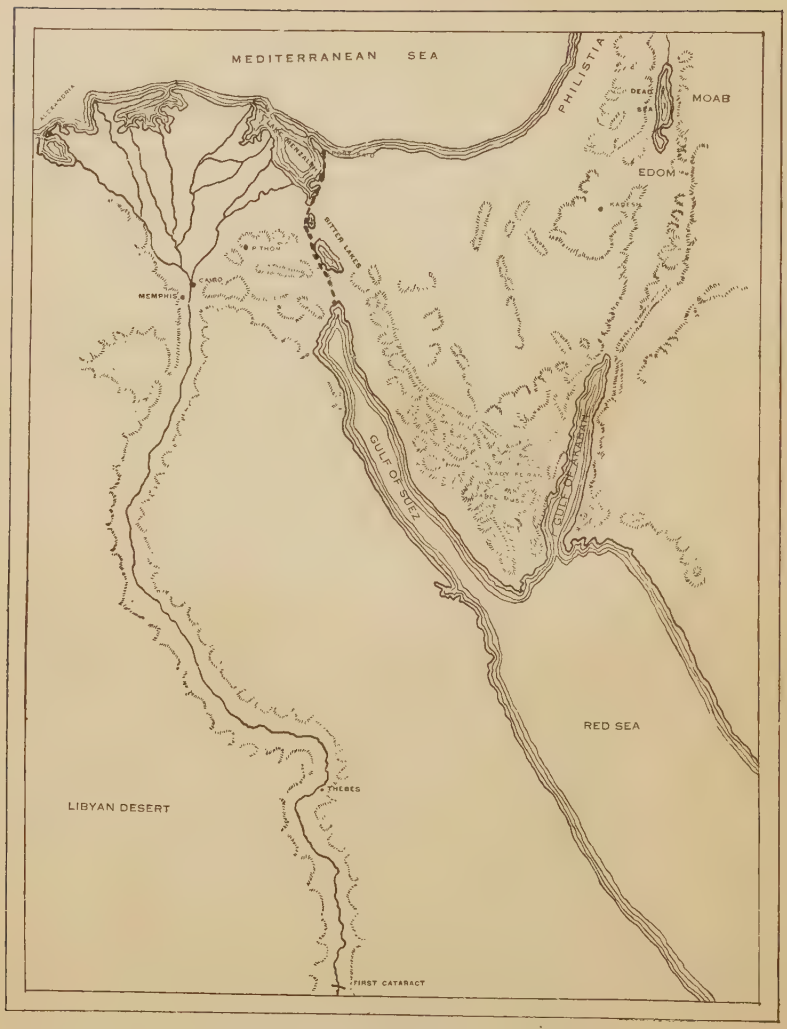


EGYPT AND SOUTHERN SYRIA

CHAPTER I

ISRAEL IN BONDAGE IN EGYPT

Scripture: Exod. 1:1–22

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—A severe famine caused Jacob and his sons to leave Palestine and go to Egypt. There they were kindly treated by the King and were allowed to settle on the delta of the Nile. After a long time a new royal family came into power and began to oppress them. They were forced to make brick, to build treasure cities, and to work in the fields. Taskmasters were set over them to see that the work was done. The king also ordered them to throw every baby boy into the river. This they were very unwilling to do.

(2) *Historical situation.*—The settlement of the Israelites in Egypt probably occurred during the reign of the Hyksos or so-called Shepherd Kings. These were rulers of Asiatic peoples who came from Syria, invaded Egypt when it was weak from many dissensions, and established a strong kingdom with its capital at Avaris[1] on the delta of the Nile. These kings naturally welcomed other settlers from Syria, such as the family of Jacob, because their own position in Egypt was strengthened thereby.

[1] The exact site of Avaris is undetermined.

The Hyksos were finally driven out of Egypt by a Theban prince named Amosis. He and his successors carried on long wars with them and other peoples of Syria. It was because the Egyptians feared that, in case of another Syrian invasion, the Israelites would join Egypt's enemies, that they began such hard treatment toward them. Rameses II is usually considered to be the Pharaoh of the oppression. He was one of the greatest of Egypt's rulers and in his long reign of sixty-seven years made many campaigns and erected more buildings than any other king. He had his official seat in the east of the delta near the Syrian frontier.

(3) *The store cities.*—Pithom one of the cities mentioned in Exod. 1:11, was discovered by Dr. Naville in 1883 on the eastern border of Egypt. Here he found large storehouses with walls two or three yards thick, made of crude bricks. These buildings contained a great many rectangular chambers of different sizes, none of which communicated with the others. Numerous pictures on the walls showed that these storerooms were filled from the top and were emptied either from above or through a door in the side.

(4) *Egyptian bricks.*—Kiln bricks were not generally used in Egypt except in places in contact with water. The ordinary bricks were simply dried in the sun and they are still as firm as when they were made ages ago. When made of Nile mud, straw

was added to prevent cracking, but bricks made of clay held together without straw.

There is a painting at Thebes on the walls of the tomb of Rekshara, an officer of the court of Thothmes III (about 1400 B.C.), which represents captives making bricks under the direction of task-masters. The following is a description of the way the bricks were made:

> Black Nile soil is first dug down into a hole already made at a convenient spot near the water; it is then mixed with sufficient sand if a good quality is desired, and with chopped straw which is cut up by the threshing rollers used at harvest. Water is poured over it and it is trampled into a smooth paste. Baskets of this paste are then carried out to the moulding ground, a smooth, clear space near at hand. The moulder places his wooden mould on the ground, lifts a double handful of mud, and drops it in, presses it down, and wipes off the surplus. He then lifts the mould-frame by the handle and leaves the brick on the ground to dry; the frame is then placed close to it and another is moulded, until the ground is covered with bricks in regular rows. These remain for a week or more to dry in the sun and are then ready for building [Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. II, p. 32].

(5) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Tell the story of the chapter.

b) Explain how the Israelites got to Egypt and rehearse the story of Joseph. Explain the reason for the Egyptian oppression.

c) Prepare for the following chapters by showing how sorely the Israelites needed a deliverer. Ask

the pupils what they think God's attitude is toward the oppressed. Teach the beatitude, Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.

(6) *Notebook.*—Have the pupils study the picture of the captives making bricks in Egypt. Then let them write, in the space provided, a description of what each captive is doing, according to the following list: 1, 2, drawing water from the tank; 3, 6, digging mud; 5, 7, 10, 15, loading and carrying mud; 4 and 8, moulding bricks; 9, tightening rope on hoe; 13, carrying finished bricks; 12, 14, taskmasters; 16, returning for another load of bricks.

CHAPTER II

THE BIRTH AND EDUCATION OF MOSES

Scripture: Exod. 2:1–11

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—A little Hebrew boy born in Egypt was hidden by his mother for three months, as she was unwilling to throw him into the river. When she could hide him no longer she took a box, made it water-tight with pitch, put the child in it, and laid it among the flags at the edge of the river. The boy's sister stood by to see what would happen to him. Then Pharaoh's daughter came down to bathe and saw the box and sent for it. When it was opened the baby cried. The Princess pitied him and decided to keep him. His sister then came up and offered to get a nurse and brought her own mother who received wages to bring up the boy. Later he was taken to the Princess and became her adopted son. She called him Moses.

(2) *Egyptian education.*—How much of the later work of Moses was due to Egyptian influence cannot now be determined. The Hebrew tradition of his education is reflected in Acts 7:22: "Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." Many documents have come down to us giving us details about the education of Egyptian boys (see

Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 320 ff., from which most of the following facts are taken):

A letter from an Egyptian to his tutor reads as follows: "I was with thee since I was brought up as a child; thou didst beat my back and thy instructions went into my ear."

The lesson time lasted only half the day, yet it seemed to the pupils to "endure forever like the mountains." At noon the children left the school shouting for joy.

For food a schoolboy had three rolls of bread and two jugs of beer brought to him from home daily by his mother. The following proverb shows the Egyptian science of pedagogy—The youth has a back, he attends when it is beaten.

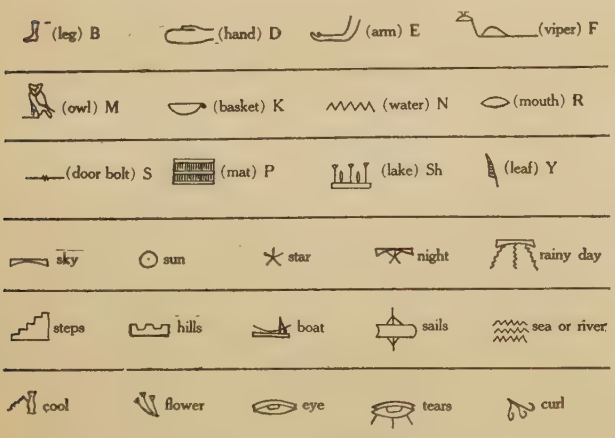
In the course of study first came learning to write. Then the art thus acquired was improved by copying fairy tales, religious and magical books, poetry, moral maxims, and business letters. A great number of schoolboys' copy-books have been found in Egypt. They are more abundant than any other kind of ancient Egyptian literature. The pages were short, and three pages was the average daily task. On the upper edge the tutors wrote their corrections. On the back of the books are scribbled pictures of lions, oxen, and other things. Here is a specimen of what was written in an Egyptian copy-book:

"Harvest. The worm took half the food, the hippopotamus the other half. Many men were in the field, the locusts the cattle ate; the sparrows stole. Woe to the farmers! The remainder, which is in the threshing floor, the thieves made an end of for him."

The boys also were taught arithmetic, but they do not seem to have been able to multiply by a number larger than two. The Egyptians had some knowledge of geometry, but they made some serious mistakes in computing the area of triangles and some other figures. Astronomy was studied and some of their star charts have come down to us.

(3) *Egyptian writing.*—Egyptian writing was rather complicated but the following facts are worth noting. Three different sets of signs were used, each sign being a picture: (*a*) the alphabet, each sign representing a simple sound; (*b*) each sign representing a syllable; (*c*) each representing a word or idea. These last are called ideographs, and were often placed at the end of a word to show where it stopped and to indicate what kind of an idea it expressed.

The following are a few specimens of Egyptian writing:



(4) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Review the previous chapter.

b) Tell the story of this chapter.

c) Tell about the schooling of an Egyptian boy, pointing out the similarity between boys then and now. Show the importance of studying diligently at school in order to serve God better when one grows up. Point out the value of Miriam's care in watching over her little brother when he was in the box in the river.

(5) *Notebook*.—Have the pupils study the specimens of Egyptian writing. Help them puzzle out what the ideographs represent, and the ideas for which they stand. In review, let them write beside each symbol its name, and at the bottom of the page the title—Egyptian writing.

CHAPTER III

MOSES IN MIDIAN

Scripture: Exod. 2:11—4:17

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—When Moses had grown up he was much impressed by the hardships of the Hebrews. One day he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew. Moses killed the Egyptian and hid the body in the sand. When this became known, he fled into the land of Midian. There he met the seven daughters of the priest of Midian and helped them to water their flocks. He was welcomed to their home by their father and married Zipporah, one of the daughters. He now became a shepherd, keeping the flock of his father-in-law. One day he came with his flock to Horeb, a holy mountain. There he saw a bush that burned with fire but was not burned up. When he came closer he heard God speaking to him and telling him to go back and deliver the Hebrews from their slavery in Egypt.

(2) *The priest of Midian.*—There is some confusion about the name of Moses' father-in-law. He is called Reuel (A. V. Raguel) in Exod. 2:18; Num. 10:29; Jether in Exod. 4:18 (margin), and Jethro in other places. He had a son named Hobab (Num. 10:29). Many eminent scholars

today think that Moses learned the worship of Jehovah from Jethro. Though there is much to substantiate this view, the older idea that the Hebrews worshiped Jehovah before the time of Moses is still held more commonly than the other. It is evident, however, that it was in the wilderness that he received the impetus for his great work.

(3) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Review the previous chapter.

b) Tell the story of this chapter, making the incidents as vivid as possible.

c) Point out that any summons to duty or service is as much the voice of God as the voice from the bush in our story.

(4) *Notebook.*—A map of Egypt is to be colored to show the importance of the Nile. The fertile areas, which are indicated by dotted lines on either side of the river, and in Palestine, are to be colored green; the deserts yellow, and the seas blue. Teach the following facts while this is being done. The fertile strip of land along the river is about seven miles wide on the average. Though there is rain in winter in the Delta, there is scarcely any at any other time in the rest of Egypt. This portion, which is six hundred miles long (from the Delta to the First Cataract), depends entirely on the river. The heavy tropical rains at the source of the Nile cause it to rise late in June. Gradually it overflows

its banks till in October the land looks like a lake. By November the river returns to its bed, leaving the fields covered with a film of rich earth. In a few weeks the land is covered with verdure.

CHAPTER IV

THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT

Scripture: Exod. 4:18—11:10

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—Moses returned to Egypt and told the Israelites that Jehovah had pitied them and was about to deliver them. Then Moses and his brother Aaron went to Pharaoh and asked permission for the Hebrews to go into the wilderness to hold a feast. Instead of granting the request Pharaoh increased their burdens. Then followed a series of plagues that finally made the Egyptians glad to be rid of the Hebrews.

(2) *The message of Moses.*—"All the sources of the Pentateuch are at one in pointing out as the fundamental act of Moses his proclamation of Jahweh as the God of Israel, i.e., as the God who means certainly to deliver Israel from the slavery of Egypt and who on that account has sole claim to the worship and obedience of his people" (Kautsch).

(3) *The plagues.*—

a) *The river turned into blood.*—When the waters of the Nile rise they become green from fragments of vegetable matter. In time the color changes to a dull ochreous red. The first plague may have been due to the detachment of a dam of vegetable

matter high up in the river, the organisms in it discoloring the water and making it foul. This probably happened in August.

b) *Frogs.*—Frogs are in most years plentiful in the Nile but they do not usually wander from the river. Plagues of frogs are recorded by several ancient writers. Frogs would naturally multiply in a river full of organic matter. This probably happened in September.

c and *d*) *Insect pests.*—The word "gnats" ought probably to be substituted for "lice." The flies were most likely gadflies. Insect pests are common in Egypt and are very troublesome. They are often brought by the south wind, appearing in clouds and filling the houses. They are always most numerous after the waters have subsided, i.e., about October or November.

e and *f*) *The murrain of cattle and the boils.*—These diseases may have been spread by the insects becoming malignant about December.

g) *Hail.*—This is very uncommon in Egypt, though terrible hail storms sometimes occur. This plague came probably in January.

h) *Locusts.*—The east wind brought this pest and when the wind shifted the plague was removed. In March, 1843, Lepsius was suddenly over-shadowed by a cloud of locusts which darkened the sky.

i) *Darkness.*—Such a condition of darkness is sometimes brought about by a wind from the south-

west called *hamsin*. It is liable to blow between the end of February and the middle of April. It is a hot blast laden with so much sand and dust that the air becomes as black as in the worst London fogs. It sometimes travels in a narrow stream so that one part of the land may be light while the rest is dark.

j) *Death of the first-born.*—Some sort of pestilence seems to be referred to here. Many outbreaks of plague are recorded in history. Such pestilences are said to be worst at the time of the *hamsin* wind. This plague happened at the Passover time, i.e., about April. (Most of the above details are taken from Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible.*)

(4) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Review the previous chapter.

b) Tell how Moses obeyed the divine summons, returned to Egypt, and proclaimed his message.

c) Describe the signs he did in Pharaoh's presence. Explain that the latter refused Moses' demands, and increased the burdens of the Israelites.

d) Describe briefly the plagues.

e) Point out the faith of Moses in continuing to work for the deliverance of his people even when they were opposed to him, and in spite of the obstinacy of Pharaoh. Make it clear that the nation which neglects the laws of God inevitably suffers in some form or another.

(5) *Notebook.*—Have the pupils write in their Notebooks a list of the plagues of Egypt. Discuss with the class the questions in the Notebook; then have each pupil write an answer for himself.

CHAPTER V

CROSSING THE RED SEA

Scripture: Exod. 12:37–42; 13:17—14:31; 15:20, 21

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—After the last plague Pharaoh told the Hebrews to leave the country and they did so in great haste. But they had not gone far before Pharaoh changed his mind and started in pursuit with six hundred war chariots. The Hebrews were terrified when they saw their pursuers, but they escaped in a remarkable way. An east wind had blown all night and had forced back the shallow waters of the narrow arm of the Red Sea that lay in front of them, so that they crossed on foot. The Egyptians followed, but their chariot wheels stuck in the mud and before they could get out the water came back and overwhelmed them.

When the Hebrews saw how they had been delivered they rejoiced greatly. Miriam, Moses' sister, took a timbrel and led the women in dances chanting this song:

> I will sing unto Jehovah for he hath triumphed gloriously.
> The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

(2) *The action of wind on shallow water.*—The action of wind on shallow water has many times

produced conditions like those recorded here in Exodus. "For instance the Russians in 1738 entered the Crimea, which was strongly fortified against them by the Turks, at the Isthmus of Perekop, by a passage made for them by the wind through the shallow waters of the putrid sea at the northwest corner of the Sea of Azov. And Major-General Tulloch has recorded an instance even more to the point, when, as he himself observed, the waters of Lake Menzaleh at the entrance of the Suez Canal receded for a distance of seven miles. . . . . Other instances are given by Naville" [Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. I, p. 802].

(3) *The probable course of march.*—The Bible mentions explicitly the various stages of the march, Rameses, Succoth, Etham, Pihahiroth, Migdol, and Baal-Zephon, but it is difficult to locate these places now. Rameses was one of the treasure cities on which they were working. Naville has shown that Succoth is probably the same as Pithom, the other treasure city which he discovered in 1883. From here they probably followed an ancient canal that ran eastward till they reached the fortifications that ran north and south across the Isthmus of Suez. Etham probably was at this point, as the word seems to mean "fortification" in Egyptian. The course indicated was one of the main roads out of Egypt, and a papyrus manuscript has been found which describes the flight of runaway slaves along

this very road. At the fortifications the Israelites turned southward. The other places cannot certainly be identified as yet, nor can we tell exactly where the sea was crossed. There is evidence to show that the Red Sea in ancient times extended farther north than now, but it has not been shown that this condition existed at the time of the Exodus. If the Gulf of Suez was connected with the Bitter Lakes at that time, the crossing may have occurred there. If not, it probably took place nearer to the present town of Suez.

(4) *The number of people in the Exodus.*—The number is given in Exod. 12:37 and elsewhere as 600,000 men with their families, and a mixed multitude besides. This would make about three million in all. It has long been felt that these numbers must be too large. For, in the first place, an unorganized mob of that size could scarcely move rapidly enough to escape the Egyptian chariots. Other considerations are (1) the inability of the land of Goshen to support more than 20,000 people; (2) the fact that Moses at first personally heard and decided all their disputes; (3) the battle with Amalek at Rephidim was nearly equal, though the Amalekites probably could not muster for this fight more than 5,000 men. Many other facts point in the same direction. Dr. Petrie in *Researches in Sinai* (p. 211) suggests that the mistake has arisen through the ambiguity of the Hebrew

word *alaf* in the census in the first chapter of the Book of Numbers. *Alaf* may mean "thousand" or "family." Instead of reading in Num. 1:21, "Of Reuben forty and six thousand and five hundred," he reads "forty and six families, five hundred men." In this way he gets a total of about 600 families and 5,550 people. For further information see the book referred to.

(5) *The Song of Miriam.*—The long poem in Exod., chap. 15, is a late composition, inserted apparently on account of its subject. Miriam's song is the couplet in vs. 21 (it occurs also in the first verse of the same chapter as a sort of text).

(6) *The Passover.*—It is commonly believed by Jews that the Passover was first observed on the night preceding the Exodus and that the word is derived from the fact that the Israelites were "passed over" in the final plague. However, many scholars have concluded from Moses' words in Exod. 12:21 and from other facts that the Passover is much older and was originally distinct from the feast of unleavened bread, with which it is now connected. They hold that it was an ancient festival celebrated in the early spring by the shepherds before setting out for new pastures. Later when a tendency appeared to give historical associations to old festivals, this custom was explained by a reference to the "night of watching" in Egypt (see the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. IX, p. 554).

(7) *How an Egyptian might have described the Exodus.*—

A Bedawy tribe had wandered down from Mesopotamia to southern Palestine. There they had connections with various peoples, Moabites and Ammonites, whom they looked upon as akin to themselves. A dearth in Syria made them emigrate into Egypt where a part of them stayed on as settlers in the eastern border of the Delta. They were employed by Ramessu II on his public works. The attack on their kindred Israelites by Merenptah made them restless, and this was encouraged by other Bedawyn coming into the same district. One of them who had been well educated by us had run away into the desert, and settled in Sinai. Seeing that the land was sufficient to support his kindred, he came back and tried to get permission for them to go on a pilgrimage to a sacred mountain. This was refused; but many troubles of bad seasons and plague at last so disheartened us that, in the confusion, some thousands of these tribes escaped into the wilderness. They safely crossed the shallows of the gulf but a detachment of troops following them was caught and swept away. After settling beyond the reach of our government and living in the desert for many years, they took advantage of the victories of Ramessu II in Palestine. After he had completely crushed the Amorites and other inhabitants, these Israelites (with many of their kindred tribes) pressed in to occupy the bare places of the land and succeeded in taking many of the towns [Dr. W. M. F. Petrie, *Researches in Sinai*, pp. 221–22].

(8) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Review the previous chapter.

b) Describe the flight of the Israelites and the pursuit by the Egyptians.

c) Explain the crossing of the Red Sea and the overthrow of Pharaoh's chariotry.

d) Describe the joy of the Israelites at their deliverance, pointing out that freedom is the natural desire of the human soul.

e) Show how Moses' faith and leadership, which had stood the test so often before, were again equal to the emergency and were magnificently rewarded.

(9) *Notebook.*—The picture in the Notebook is part of a battle scene on the wall of the great temple of Abu Simbel, north of the Second Cataract of the Nile. Have the pupils color this. The original colors are as follows: The faces, chests, and arms of the men are dark brown, their garments yellow. The shield is yellow. The body of the chariot is yellow, the decorations on it are green. The wheels are yellow. The central parts of the bow-case and quiver are red, the ends yellow, except the top of the bow-case, which is green. The horse is dark brown. The colors on his blanket run in horizontal stripes as follows: blue, yellow, blue, red, blue, yellow, blue, yellow. The head-covering is yellow. The neck-piece is alternately red and yellow. The saddle is yellow, the saddle-cloth blue. The girths and lines are red, the bridle blue. Have the pupils write the introductory couplet of Miriam's song under the picture.

CHAPTER VI

NOMADIC LIFE IN THE WILDERNESS

Scripture: Exod. 15:22—16:36

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—From the Red Sea the people led by Moses traveled three days into the wilderness of Shur. At Marah the water was bitter, but became sweet when Moses, under the direction of Jehovah, cast a certain tree into the spring. Continuing the journey, the traveling multitude was cheered by twelve springs of good water and a fine grove of palm trees at Elim. As the way led into the desolate portions of the Sinai peninsula, the people began to murmur against Moses and long for the food they had enjoyed back in Egypt. It was then that they received the promise, "At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread." Accordingly large flocks of quail flew into camp that evening and in the morning when the dew was gone manna lay upon the ground.

(2) *Manna.*—This, we are told, was flaky, small, and white, resembling the seed of the coriander plant, and likened in taste to honey wafers. It disappeared as the sun became hot, and spoiled if kept more than a day; though a double portion was to be gathered on the day preceding

the Sabbath, for which special period it remained good.

Many would identify manna with an exudation from certain trees. Both the flowering ash of southern Europe, and a species of tamarisk found in the Sinai peninsula are known to yield a substance containing sugar. The description of the manna does not wholly support this identification, though in Num. 11:17 it is compared to bdellium which is a resinous exudation.

Others identify the manna with a lichen found in Arabia and in many deserts. This forms incrustations on stones, is grayish yellow outside and white within. These crusts become detached from the stones and are driven by the wind or washed up in large heaps. They are used as a substitute for grain in famine years.

Both of the substances mentioned above may have been used by the Israelites at different times.

(3) *Quails.*—These birds fly north in the spring and south in the autumn. Their bodies are so heavy as compared with the power of their wings that they find it difficult to cross even narrow stretches of water. If forced by a wind to attempt to cross the Gulf of Suez, many would perish in the water, and the rest would be so exhausted on reaching the other side as to be an easy prey. This was probably the condition of the large catch of quails described in Num. 11:31, 32.

(4) *Tents.*—

The tent of the ancient Israelites was in all probability very similar to that of the modern Bedouins of Syria and Arabia. The covering of the tent originally consisted of skins, later of the modern coarse tent-cloth spun of the hair of black goats. . . . . The cloth, which is spun in long, narrow strips on primitive looms by Bedouin women, felts quickly and is proof against the heaviest rains. The strips are sewed together to form a covering of the required size and are stretched over three rows of three tent poles each. The center poles are somewhat higher than those in front or behind and the covering of the tent consequently falls away slightly on either side where the rows of poles also are frequently lower so that the roof is somewhat arched: the covering of the tent was held in place by strong cords which were fastened to wooden pegs driven into the ground. . . . . A tent-cloth was hung from the top in such a manner as to give protection against wind and sun; and a curtain suspended on the three middle poles divided the tent into two sections, one for the men and the other for women, since only the wealthiest had special tents for the latter.

The tents were furnished with extreme simplicity. A few coarse straw mats covered a portion of the floor and served for both chairs and beds, while a hole in the ground in the men's division formed the hearth. A round piece of leather was spread on the floor as a table, and bags of goat-skins with the hair outward contained milk and grain, the equipment being completed by a baking-pan, a few rough metal spoons, a hand-mill for grinding grain, and saddles for the camels [*Jewish Encyclopedia,* Vol. XII, pp. 104–5].

(5) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Review the previous chapter.

b) Discuss, with the class, camping experiences.

c) Describe the food of the Israelites in the wilderness.

d) Describe the tents and their furniture.

e) Point out that freedom with poverty was better than slavery with plenty. Make it evident that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth," but in the fidelity with which he does the will of the Father in heaven.

(6) *Notebook.*—Have the pupils study the picture of modern Bedouins in this region and paste it upon the proper page of the Notebook.

CHAPTER VII

THE BATTLE AT REPHIDIM

Scripture: Exod. 17:1–16; Num. 33:10–14

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—After leaving Elim the Israelites camped once more by the Red Sea. Three more encampments brought them to Rephidim. Here they met the hostile forces of the Amalekites who had gathered to repel the invaders. Joshua led the Israelites in this fight, while Moses went to the top of a neighboring hill with his rod in his hand. The contest was nearly even. When Moses held up his hand the Israelites had the advantage, but when he let down his hand the battle turned in favor of the Amalekites. Therefore Aaron and Hur, who were with Moses, seated him on a stone and held up his hands till the sun went down, by which time the Israelites had vanquished their enemies.

At Rephidim Moses is said to have provided water for the people, who were in a rebellious and threatening mood, by striking a rock.

(2) *The place of the conflict.*—It is generally agreed that the Amalekites gathered in what is now called the Wady Feiran. The following description is by a traveler:

> The Feiran valley runs in a northwesterly direction .... for about thirty miles, and then turns to the southwest,

almost at a right angle, and descends to the sea. . . . . The cliffs are so high and so near the perpendicular, the turns so sharp and unexpected, and in the part under Mt. Serbal, the vegetation is so luxuriant, that it suggests fairyland. . . . . As far as I know everyone who has been in Sinai agrees that the Amalekites must have assembled their tribes in the Wady Feiran, for there is hardly another place where the tribes could risk the serious undertaking of a muster in force. Such a muster not only means the calling of the inhabitants, who are scattered over thousands of square miles into one valley, but their donkeys, goats, and sheep must come with them. This difficulty appears the greater when we consider that the majority of the wells are at least a day's journey apart, and that from sixteen to forty camels can drink one well dry. The first few families who reach a well on the road exhaust it; and after that, when the people from the greater distance come, they find the wells near the meeting-place empty, and must hurry on to reach the central point before their flocks die. If there is a large quantity of water at the rendezvous, the watering can be managed; but if thirty people and flocks arrive together at even a comparatively well-watered place, they will drink up the available water-supply at once. . . . .

Today, as it must always have been, the Wady Feiran is the one center of the peninsula. . . . . Here there is water in plenty, clear, sparkling water from the rock, and to sit on the cool, damp ground in deep shade can be appreciated only by those who have journeyed along the stifling valleys, where the blistering rocks throw back the hot rays of the sun. This is the home of the tribes. In the Feiran they must have assembled and before it taken their stand when their country was threatened. If they won, they remained sure of water for themselves and their flocks till sufficient had collected in the wells to allow them to scatter. If they

lost, the survivors in small bands must have struggled to the northeast [C. T. Currelly in Dr. Petrie's *Researches in Sinai*, chap. xvii].

(3) *The number of the Amalekites.*—This was a muster probably of all the tribes on the peninsula hostile to the Israelites, yet the total number could not have been very great on account of the barrenness of the country. We have various indications, e.g., the remarkable preservation of ancient inscriptions on rocks, to show that the climate at the time of the Exodus was much the same as now. Hence we infer that under ordinary circumstances the land could not support a much larger population than it does today, that is, about 5,000 persons. The gathering of even as large a force as this must have been a serious undertaking, as shown in the preceding paragraph. The fact that the contest was at first indecisive points to the conclusion suggested in chap. v, that the Hebrew force was not much larger than that of their enemies.

(4) *Moses as a leader.*—Travelers tell us that fresh water can be obtained by digging holes in the ground near the sea on the east shore of the Gulf of Suez. Moses probably knew this and took advantage of it. In this way he could keep his forces from being scattered and thus be ready to repel any flank attacks from the mountains by the hostile tribes. The victory at Rephidim was so complete that the Israelites were not molested for

many years, and thus had ample time for the perfecting of their national organization. The whole story of the Exodus indicates that Moses was a shrewd and capable leader.

(5) *The water from the rock.*—A stream of water nine inches in diameter flows out of the rock in the Feiran and then wanders down the valley. Whether or not this is the rock referred to in the narrative is hard to say, and we are left to conjecture as to what gave rise to the tradition.

(6) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Review the previous chapter.

b) Tell the story of the battle of Rephidim, picturing Moses on the hill with his arms held up by Aaron and Hur.

c) Tell the tradition of how Moses extracted water from the rock. Point out the great value of water in the desert.

d) Show that this victory insured peace to the Israelites for a considerable period.

e) Raise the question as to what would have happened had Moses been less persistent and faithful, and speak of the responsibility of great leaders in modern times.

(6) *Notebook.*—Trace on the map which was colored in connection with Lesson III a possible route of the Israelites as far as Rephidim. Be sure that the pupils understand that the location of the places mentioned is not definitely determined.

CHAPTER VIII

THE COVENANT AT SINAI

Scripture: Exod. 18:1–27; 24:1–8

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—After the victory over the Amalekites, the Israelites were met by Jethro bringing Moses' wife Zipporah and her two sons. Jethro was jubilant over the deliverances wrought by Jehovah; he also suggested a way by which Moses could lighten his own burdens as judge.

The next encampment was at Mt. Sinai. Here the Israelites covenanted to obey perpetually the God who had delivered them from the bondage of Egypt and from all the perils of their journey through the desert. The ceremony of the covenant was as follows:

Moses built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and erected twelve pillars, one for each tribe. Young men then offered burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar, catching the blood in basins. After sprinkling half the blood on the altar Moses read the terms of the compact which he had written in the Book of the Covenant. When the people had promised to keep these terms, Moses sprinkled the rest of the blood on the people.

(2) *The sacred mountain.*—This mountain was probably regarded as sacred long before Moses' time, and not only by the Israelites, but by other peoples also. Of such sacred places, W. Robertson Smith has the following to say:

> All that is necessary to constitute a Semitic sanctuary is a precedent; it is assumed that where the god has once manifested himself and shown favor to his worshipers he will do so again, and when precedent has been strengthened by frequent repetition the holiness of the place is fully established. . . . .
>
> Jehovah is not tied to one place more than another, but He is not to be found except in places where "He has set a memorial of His name" and in these He "comes to His worshipers to bless them" (Exod. 20:24). . . . . It is clear that in Exod., chap. 3, the ground about the burning bush does not become holy because God has appeared. On the contrary the theophany takes place there because it is holy ground. In Exod. 19:4 when Jehovah at Sinai says that He has brought the Israelites unto Himself, the meaning is that He has brought them to the mount of God, and long after the establishment of the Hebrews in Canaan, poets and prophets describe Jehovah, when He comes to help His people, as marching from Sinai in thundercloud and storm [*Religion of the Semites*, pp. 115–17].

(3) *The location of the sacred mountain.*—It is difficult to locate the mountain described in Exodus among the many mountains of the Sinaitic peninsula. The traditional site is Jebel Musa. Several other identifications have been suggested and various passages of Scripture have been quoted

in support of them. It is probable that the Hebrews themselves were not agreed as to the location of the sacred mountain, and hence it is but natural that we should find it hard to identify the mountain. In one tradition it was called Horeb, and was placed probably on the west of Edom. In another tradition it was called Sinai and located probably near the traditional identification. The itinerary seems to agree with this latter version. Of course this itinerary may have arisen later with someone who had traveled in Sinai. We cannot at present determine the question decisively.

(4) *The Books of the Covenant.*—Of this we have two versions: a longer one in Exod. 20:23—23:33, and a shorter one in Exod. 34:12–26. These form the oldest law code in the Bible. They are called Covenant Codes and in most of their essential requirements probably go back to Moses, though the question how much of the Law is due to Moses is an intricate and much-disputed one. The following view, however, seems to be the most reasonable. Moses seems to have formulated a simple set of rules for worship and laws for society, something as follows:

I. SIMPLE RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

1. No images of other gods (Exod. 20:23; 34:17).
2. An altar of simple materials (Exod. 20:24).
3. Possession of firstlings by Jehovah (Exod. 22:29, 30; 34:19, 20).

4. No leaven in sacrifices (Exod. 23:18—34:25).
5. Rest on seventh day (Exod. 23:12; 34:21).

II. SIMPLE LAWS OF SOCIETY

1. Against manslaughter (Exod. 21:12–14).
2. Reverence to parents (Exod. 21:15, 17).
3. Against man-stealing (Exod. 21:16).
4. Concerning personal injuries (Exod. 21:18–25).
5. Concerning theft (Exod. 22:1–4).

Moses also was a judge and his decisions became precedents handed down from judge to judge, orally at first but later committed to writing. Changing conditions necessitated certain changes in the laws and various editions of the revised statutes were made. The Covenant Code above mentioned is probably such a revision. A much later revision appears in Deuteronomy with enlargements and changes to suit a new situation. There are two other codes in the Pentateuch, the so-called Holiness Code and the Priests' Code. The last is the most elaborate and deals almost entirely with ceremonials. As it is even more elaborate than Ezekiel's Code it is thought to have received its present form subsequently to the time of that prophet. However, all these codes are lineal descendants of the code of Moses. In his legal judgments Moses was, of course, guided by ancient custom and the ideas of justice of his time. Some of the enactments of the Covenant Code are parallel to laws in the Code of Hammurabi,

a king of Babylon who lived 800 or 1,000 years before Moses.

The Decalogue or Ten Commandments of Exod. 20:1–17 and Deut. 5:4–21 is in several respects parallel to the Covenant Code, but on account of the advanced ideas of the third and tenth commandments and for other reasons it is considered not so old. The "Ten Words" written on stone were, according to Exod. 34:27–28, the laws immediately preceding these verses, though doubtless in more compact form.

(5) *The ceremony of the Covenant.*—The Hebrew word translated "covenant" means literally "a cutting in pieces." A sacrificial victim having been cut up, the parties to an agreement passed between the pieces, invoking on themselves the fate of the animal if they failed to keep their oath. See Gen. 15:10–18. This may have been the idea in this case. Stones were originally regarded as embodiments of gods, but it is hard to say what they meant here. Herodotus, the Greek historian, records an Arab ceremony of swearing friendship where blood was smeared on seven stones (Herodotus iii. 8; for further information see W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 200–212).

(6) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Review the previous chapter.

b) Describe and explain the ceremony of the covenant.

c) Explain Moses' position as a law-giver and summarize his code.

d) Point out that as Christians we are under a much stricter law. Polygamy, divorce for trivial causes, slavery, and hatred of enemies were all allowed by the Mosaic code, whereas all these things are forbidden by Jesus as well as everything else that disagrees with the practice of love toward all mankind.

e) Raise the question as to whether we should like to return to old standards of life. Let the children picture conditions which would then be possible and decide whether they prefer them to the present.

(7) *Notebook.*—If the pupils do not already know the Ten Commandments have them learn the simple form given in their Notebooks. In the discussion there is no need to avoid commandment seven. Speak of it simply in terms of loyalty of father or mother to the home and family.

CHAPTER IX

THE TENT OF MEETING

Scripture: Exod. 33:7–11

(1) *The scriptural account.*—

Now Moses used to take the tent and to pitch it without the camp, afar off from the camp; and he called it the tent of meeting. And it came to pass, that everyone that sought Jehovah went out unto the tent of meeting, which was without the camp. And it came to pass when Moses went out unto the Tent, that all the people rose up, and stood, every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he had gone into the Tent. And it came to pass, when Moses entered into the Tent, the pillar of cloud descended, and stood at the door of the Tent, and Jehovah spake with Moses. And all the people saw the pillar of cloud stand at the door of the Tent: and all the people rose up and wŏrshiped, every man at his tent door. And Jehovah spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his minister Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the Tent.[1] [See also Exod. 18:7, 12–16; Num. 10:33–35; 11:16, 17, 24–30; 12:1–15, for facts about the Tent.]

(2) *The Tent.*—The Tent of Meeting here described was probably of the same kind as the tents of the people. The only furniture we are sure it contained was the Ark. In front of the Tent was an altar of earth or unhewn stone, without steps

[1] American Revision: copyright by Thomas Nelson & Son.

(Exod. 20:24–26). The smoke arising from sacrifices on this altar seems to have given rise to the legend about the pillar of cloud. The keeper of this Tent was a young man named Joshua, of the tribe of Ephraim. He remained at the Tent all the time. (The boy Samuel, also an Ephraimite, had a similar position at Shiloh long afterward.) At this Tent Moses sat as judge and as spokesman of Jehovah, and those who needed his advice or decision came thither. Here probably Jethro offered his burnt-offering and ate bread with Aaron and the elders of Israel (Exod. 18:12). When Moses, following Jethro's advice (Exod. 18:17–23), deputed part of his authority to the seventy elders, the ceremony took place round the Tent of Meeting (Num. 11:24). Here also occurred the vindication of Moses from the taunts of Aaron and Miriam in regard to the Cushite woman Moses had married (Num. 12:1–15).

(3) *The priestly account of the Tent.*—In Exod. 25–31; 35–40; Num. 1:47–54; 2:17, etc., there is a very different account of the Tent which contained the Ark. Instead of being outside the camp, it is at the very center; instead of having one Ephraimite attendant, it is intrusted to numerous Levites, and no one else is allowed to approach on pain of death; instead of a low altar of earth or stone, there is a high altar of wood and brass. Besides, the Tent thus described is extremely

elaborate, too much so for the desert and too cumbrous for nomads.

How did so different an account of the Tent arise? We are probably to regard it as similar to the paintings of the great masters, in which they represent scriptural incidents, but depict the costumes, scenery, and faces of their own day and land. So the author of this elaborate account of the Tent took the fact of the existence of a Tent and worked it out in harmony with ideas of God current in his own day, forgetting that these conceptions were not controlling in the period of the wanderings. This description is chiefly valuable, therefore, for the sublime ideas of God's unity, holiness, and perfection, all of which qualities are symbolized by the details of the structure.

(4) *The Ark.*—The only description of the Ark left to us is the one that goes with the priestly account of the Tabernacle and is probably fanciful in certain respects, e.g., the gold sheathing and the cherubim. This last feature seems to have been an attempt to adapt for desert life the cherubim which stood guard of the Ark in Solomon's Temple (I Kings 6:23–26). We do not know exactly what the cherubim were, but as near as we can determine they were griffins, that is half eagle and half lion.

The historical Ark, then, was probably a simple wooden box, with handles or poles so that it could

be carried by two men (I Sam. 4:4). Jewish tradition says that the Ark contained the tables of the law, a golden pot holding manna, and Aaron's rod that budded (Heb. 9:4). The value of this tradition is a matter of much dispute, though most scholars agree that the Ark contained stones of some sort. There can be no doubt, however, that the Ark was very sacred and was practically considered as the habitation of Jehovah. For when the Ark started on a journey these words were spoken:

> Rise up Jehovah and let thine enemies be scattered,
> And let them that hate thee flee before thee.
> [Num. 10:35.]

Similar words were used when the Ark rested (Num. 10:36). So also when the Ark came into the camp of Israel in the days of Eli, the Philistines said, "God is come into the camp."

(5) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Review the previous chapter.

b) Aim to show what part the Ark and the Tent of Meeting played in the life of the Israelites while in the wilderness. Explain what happened when Moses went out to it. Tell the stories that centered about it.

c) If it is desired to trace the further history of the Ark, have the following references looked up: Josh. 3:15–17; 6:6; Judg. 20:26–28; I Sam. 3:3;

4:4, 11; 5:1, 8, 10; 6:15; 7:1; 14:18; II Sam. 6:1, 11, 12; 15:24, 29; I Kings 8:1–9.

d) Contrast the purpose of the Tent with our churches. Point out that we do not need an Ark to draw God near to us, but that he is always close to us.

(6) *Notebook.*—Before passing the pictures which accompany this lesson, tell of the work of the artist Tissot; then study his idea of the Ark. Have the picture pasted upon the page, calling attention to the words printed on either side.

CHAPTER X

ISRAEL AT KADESH

Scripture: Num. 10:29–34; chaps. 13, 14, 16

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—After leaving Sinai the Israelites journeyed northward, the Ark going in front, and Hobab, Moses' brother-in-law, acting as guide. Finally they came to Kadesh on the southern border of Canaan from which point twelve spies were sent into the country around Hebron to see what the chances were for a successful invasion. These spies brought back specimens of the fruit of the country to show that it was fertile, but the majority thought that the cities were too strong to be captured. A minority urged an advance, believing that these cities could not resist Jehovah.

The people were much distressed by the report of the spies and talked of choosing a new captain to lead them back to Egypt. Moses thereupon announced that Jehovah was very angry with them and had been on the point of destroying them. The people then changed their minds and were ready for an advance. Moses tried to dissuade them by assuring them that Jehovah would not help them. He even refused to allow the Ark to leave the camp. But they persisted in their purpose, and in consequence suffered a defeat at

Hormah. For the next generation Kadesh seems to have been the headquarters of the Israelites. During this period there were few notable events. The rebellion recorded in Num., chap. 16, may have occurred during this time.

(2) *The location of Kadesh.*—The identity of Kadesh with the modern 'Ayn Oadees, was practically established by H. Clay Trumbull in 1881. He thus describes the place:

> It was a marvellous sight! Out from the barren and desolate stretch of the burning desert waste we had come with magical suddenness into an oasis of verdure and beauty, unlooked for and hardly conceivable in such a region. A carpet of grass covered the ground. Fig trees laden with fruit nearly ripe enough for eating, were along the shelter of the southern hillside, shrubs and flowers showed themselves in variety and profusion, running water gurgled under the waving grass. We had seen nothing like it since leaving Wady Fayran nor was it equaled in loveliness of scene by any single bit of landscape even there [Trumbull, *Kadesh-Barnea*, pp. 272–73].

(3) *The sending of the spies.*—Num., chaps. 13 and 14, are composites made by combining two or three versions of the same incident. On the one hand we are told that the Negeb or Southland around Hebron was the part of the country spied out; that the soil was said to be fertile, but that Caleb was the only spy who advised a forward movement. On the other hand we are informed that the whole of Canaan as far north as Hamath

on the river Orontes was traversed; that the land was reported to "eat up its inhabitants," and that Joshua shared Caleb's opinion and with him escaped from the plague that killed the other spies. The former version is thought by scholars to be the older.

(4) *The rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.* —Num., chap. 16, is also composite, a story of the rebellion of the Reubenites Dathan and Abiram, against the alleged desire of Moses to make himself a prince, being fused with the story of the revolt of the Levite Korah against the priestly prerogatives of Moses and Aaron. One of the most interesting parts of the account is vs. 33, where it is said that the rebels went down alive into Sheol (A.V., "the pit"), when the ground opened under their tents. This will serve us as an introduction to a study of the Hebrew conception of the relations of earth, sea, and sky.

(5) *Cosmogony of the Israelites in ancient times.*— The earth was thought to be a disk floating on a great ocean (Isa. 40:22; Prov. 8:27; Ps. 24:2; 136:6; Exod. 20:4).

The sky was conceived to be solid (Job 37:18; Prov. 8:27), covering the earth like a vault (Job 22:14; Amos 9:6), and being supported by high mountains as pillars (Job 26:11). The sun, moon, and stars were supposed each to have a definite road on the inside of the sky (Ps. 19:6; Judg. 5:20).

In the sky also were windows and doors. Through the former came the rain which was regarded as the drippings of an ocean above the sky (Gen. 1:7; 7:11; II Kings 7:2, 19; Ps. 148:4). In Jacob's dream in Gen. 28:12–17 the angels were on a ladder stretching up to heaven's gate at which Jehovah was standing.

Inside the earth there was supposed to be a great cavern called in Hebrew "Sheol" (translated "pit," "grave," or "hell," in A.V.). It was into this pit that the rebels went alive according to Num. 16:33. In this cavern the dead were said to dwell as shadows (see margin of A.V., Ps. 88:10; Prov. 2:18; 9:18; 21:16; Isa. 14:9, etc.).

There were also thought to be holes through the earth by which the sea sometimes came up. These were called "fountains of the great deep" (Gen. 7:11; Prov. 3:20). The ocean was often personified as a sea-monster under the names Leviathan, Rahab, etc. (Isa. 27:1; Job 41:1–11, etc.), and there were evidences of the currency among the Israelites of a myth which described the conquest of Jehovah over this great monster (Isa. 51:9; Job 26:12; Ps. 74:14, and Amos 9:3 where the serpent is recorded as obedient to Jehovah). Images of this creature must have been more or less common, else the express prohibition against them would have been unnecessary (Exod. 20:4). The sea monster of Jonah 1:17 may be a personification

of the sea in a similar way, and may perhaps mean only "the ocean."

God is represented as sitting in the heavens (Ps. 2:4; Isa. 40:22), as walking on the vault of the sky (Job 22:14, A.V.), and as causing it to bend when he descends through it to the earth (Ps. 18:9; 144:5). In Exod. 24:10 we read that the elders of Israel on ascending Mt. Sinai actually saw the God of Israel and that under his feet was a sapphire pavement; from which perhaps we are to infer that Mt. Sinai was supposed to reach to the sky and that from this mountain God was seen standing on the sky. Some of the conceptions given above were outgrown, even in Old Testament times, and remained merely as poetic figures of speech.

(6) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Review the previous chapter.

b) Describe the journey to Kadesh and the sending of the spies.

c) Picture the scene on the return of the spies with their adverse report.

d) Describe the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and their fate. Explain the ancient conception of the universe and compare it with our own.

e) Let the pupils develop the thought that the spirit shown by Caleb is the one we need in overcoming temptations and difficulties.

(7) *Notebook.*—Have the pupils make a key to the diagram by the use of small numbers, as was done for them in Lesson I. Let them color the design if they desire. Turn back to the map and trace a possible route of the Israelites as far as Kadesh.

CHAPTER XI

CONQUESTS EAST OF THE JORDAN

Scripture: Num., chaps. 20–24, 32, 33:37–49

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—After a long stay in the vicinity of Kadesh the Israelites resumed their march with the intention of attacking Canaan from the east. A tedious circuit around Edom was made as the king of that country denied their request to be allowed to pass peaceably through his dominions. A similar request was made of Sihon, king of the Amorites. He refused and prepared for battle, but was defeated at Jahaz and lost his kingdom. The Israelites then made a successful attack on Og, king of Bashan, and appropriated his territory. The king of Moab, in alarm at the success of his invaders, sent for a famous soothsayer named Balaam to curse them, but was disappointed at the result.

(2) *The conquered territory.*—The kingdom of Sihon stretched from the river Jabbok on the north to the Arnon on the south; and from the desert on the east to the Jordan and the Dead Sea. According to Num. 21:26, this country or at least a part of it had been recently conquered from the Moabites. The kingdom of Og is represented as extending from the river Jabbok northward to Mt. Hermon, and included Bashan and the northern

half of Gilead. The western part of Bashan borders on the Jordan valley, and consists of a fertile plateau with rich red soil of volcanic origin. East of the plateau is a mountainous country very rich in forests and containing the peaks of extinct volcanoes. In eastern Bashan there is a most remarkable ocean of stone, 25 miles long and 19 broad and oval in shape, formed by a basaltic lava which at some time in the remote past issued from cracks in the earth and was thrown into indescribable confusion before it cooled. Though its surface is very forbidding, this district was once thickly settled, as we know from the many ruins of villages to be found there. It was anciently called the Argob; now El Leja. Bashan was famous for its well-fed kine and its oaks, but its history is meager.

Gilead is a mountainous country of limestone rock and is extremely rich in pasture lands. It therefore attracted the attention of the tribes Reuben and Gad, who had large flocks, and it was assigned to them. Here they continued their nomadic life and made little progress in civilization and hence left little history behind them. The half-tribe of Manasseh received the country of Bashan.

This account of the conquest of the land east of the Jordan is probably much condensed, for as there are a great many localities which Nature has made easily defensible, it seems likely that there was a good deal more fighting before the original

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inhabitants were dispossessed. At any rate we know that Israel had to defend this territory time and again from attacks by neighboring nations.

(3) *The story of Balaam.*—The oracles or prophecies of Balaam in Num., chaps. 23–24, are examples of a definite literary form among the Hebrews. As there was a common belief in the magical power of words, it was a regular custom to explain current events as the result of predictions of patriarchs whose words had the power to bring about their own fulfilment. The poets sharing these ideas evolved the *predictive poem* in which they described scenes with which they themselves were contemporaries as if predicted by patriarchs long before. Other examples of the use of this literary form are: the Blessing of Noah (Gen. 9:25–27); the Blessing of Isaac (Gen. 27:27–29, 39–40); the Blessing of Jacob (Gen. 49:2–27); the Blessing of Moses (Deut., chap. 33); and the apocryphal books, the Assumption of Moses, and the Testimony of the Twelve Patriarchs.

The story of Balaam was probably an ancient folk-legend appropriated and enlarged by a poet of a much later date. Allusions to other versions of the story appear elsewhere in the Bible, e.g., Num. 31:8, 16; Josh. 13:22; Rev. 2:14. The story is very interesting because it shows how soothsayers went about their work and how much confidence was placed in their blessings and cursings.

(4) *Neighboring nations.*—On the east and southeast of the Dead Sea were located the Edomites and Moabites, and north of the latter the Ammonites. With these the Israelites acknowledged blood relationships, but often quarreled bitterly with them. On the northeast the Israelites had as neighbors the important city of Damascus and certain petty kingdoms such as Geshur, Maacah, and Zobah. All of these were later included under the general name Arameans or Syrians.

(5) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Review the previous chapter.

b) Describe the detour around Edom and the conflicts with Sihon and Og.

c) Point out the conquered territory on the map, explain that it is good for pasture, and name the tribes that settled there.

d) Tell the story of Balaam.

e) Show that the Balaam story was right in the conviction it expressed that God controls human activities and that his purposes cannot be defeated. Make it evident that his attitude toward Israel was not that of favoritism but rather a determination that world-history must move toward righteousness.

(6) *Notebook.*—Turn back to the map and finish tracing a possible journey of the Israelites from Kadesh, around Edom into the land of Moab. Read the oracle of Balaam and insert the new page in the Notebook.

CHAPTER XII

THE CAPTURE OF JERICHO

Scripture: Josh., chaps. 2–8

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—Moses died on the east side of the Jordan and was succeeded by Joshua. The new commander, having learned from spies that the Canaanites were terrified, led his forces across the Jordan, established a camp at Gilgal, and attacked Jericho. This was captured and all the inhabitants were killed except one family, namely that of the woman who had befriended the spies. After that an assault was made on the neighboring city of Ai, but ended in disaster. This was supposed to be due to the wrath of Jehovah for some breach of the ban laid upon Jericho and the lot was used to discover the culprit. Achan of the tribe of Judah was finally singled out, and was put to death with his whole family. Ai was taken by a simple stratagem.

(2) *The crossing of the Jordan.*—The Jordan was crossed at the time of its floods, and according to the accounts its waters were divided for the army to pass over. Some regard this as a mere legendary exaggeration. Others point to the fact that in 1257 A.D. the conditions described in Josh., chap. 3, were practically duplicated by the occurrence of a

landslide in a narrow part of the Jordan valley, whereby the river was dammed up for several hours and the bed below that point became dry through the running-off of the water. It is possible that a similar landslide may have occurred at the time of the invasion.

(3) *Jericho.*—Jericho was the only city of importance in the Jordan valley. It is thus described by Dean Stanley:

> Beautiful as the spot is now in utter neglect it must have been far more so when it was first seen by the Israelite host at Gilgal. . . . . From that scene of their earliest settlement in Palestine, they looked over the intervening forest to what was to be the first prize of the conquest. The forest itself did not then consist, as now, merely of the picturesque thorn, but was a vast grove of majestic palms, nearly three miles broad and eight miles long. At Jericho the solitary relic of this palm forest—seen as late as 1838—has now disappeared. But as Joshua witnessed it, it must have recalled to him the magnificent palm-groves of Egypt, such as may now be seen stretching along the shores of the Nile at Memphis. Amidst this forest—as is to a certain extent the case even now—would have been seen, stretching through its open spaces, fields of ripe corn; for it was "the time of the barley harvest." . . . . Above the topmost trees would be seen the high walls and towers of the city, which from that grove derived its proud name, "Jericho, the city of palms," "high and fenced up to heaven"—the walls over which the spies had been let down and which were now to fall before their victorious countrymen. Behind the city rose the jagged range of the white limestone mountains of Judea here presenting one of the few varied and beautiful outlines that

can be seen amongst the southern hills of Palestine [Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 301].

Jericho was always easily taken in every subsequent assault, and some think that the description of the tumbling of the walls at the mere shout of the Israelites is a figurative account of the ease with which it was captured.

(4) *The ban.*—The destruction of Jericho illustrates an ancient custom of the Hebrews which though performed in the name of religion was extremely sanguinary and cruel. Jericho was put under the ban, that is, everything was devoted to Jehovah and death awaited anyone caught appropriating anything for himself. Consequently every man, woman, and child (except one family) was killed, the beasts were slaughtered, and the precious metals were put into the treasury of Jehovah. It was actually thought that Jehovah was pleased with such an extermination of his enemies (Num. 21:2, 3) and much offended by any breach of the ban (Josh. 7:1, 11; I Sam. 15:1–23). Hence if a reverse occurred after such a vow, it was natural to suspect that the Deity was offended because the terms of the ban had not been fully kept. In such cases the sacred lot was used to discover the guilty person. After the defeat at Ai the lot fell upon Achan of the tribe of Judah and he was put to death with his family. When, in a somewhat similar case the lot fell upon Jonathan, he was

ransomed by the people, which means probably that another was killed in his place.

Though in the two cases just mentioned, the culprits are said to have confessed, the lot must always have been an extremely precarious and dangerous means of discovering guilt; for as long as the people believed in the method, a man could not clear himself, however innocent he might be.

The custom of the ban was not confined to the Hebrews. Mesha, king of Moab, boasts of similar deeds. Livy in his descriptions of the death of the consul Publius Decius Mus (viii. 9) and of the son of the same (x. 28) shows the existence of a like custom among the Romans. We also find the equivalent of this and other Hebrew customs in Polynesia today, in the highly developed systems of *taboo*, a study of which sheds much light on Hebrew ceremonial observances (see Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, etc.). The Israelites came to see that such wholesale slaughters were utterly abhorrent to Jehovah (see Jonah 4:11).

(5) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Review the previous chapter.

b) Tell the stories of the adventures of the spies in Jericho.

c) Describe the crossing of the Jordan and the capture and destruction of Jericho.

d) Describe the defeat at Ai and tell how it was finally captured.

e) Contrast the idea that Jehovah was pleased with the destruction of a city with the sentiments expressed in Jonah 4:11 and point out how far in advance the author of the Book of Jonah was over the times of Joshua. Show how closely the teachings of the Book of Jonah accord with the principles of Christ stated in Matt. 5:43–48; Luke 6:27–38. Call to mind modern movements tending toward universal peace and discuss whether the abolition of warfare would be desirable.

(6) *Notebook.*—Study the Tissot picture, paste it upon the page, and insert in the Notebook.

CHAPTER XIII

SETTLEMENTS WEST OF THE JORDAN

Scripture: Judg., chap. 1

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—After the capture of Ai the Israelites seem to have divided into two parts. The tribes Judah and Simeon turned southward while other tribes proceeded northward. All gradually obtained places for themselves, but chiefly in the highlands, for they could not take the strong cities in the plains. Caleb and Othniel especially distinguished themselves in the south by the capture of the cities Hebron and Debir. The Kenites associated themselves with the southern tribes.

(2) *Different accounts of the conquest.*—We have two versions of the conquest: one, appearing in certain chapters of Joshua and in the first chapter of Judges, represents the conquests as very incomplete at first and as being only gradually accomplished by the tribes acting independently. The other version, found in Josh., chaps. 10–12, etc., represents the conquest as made by the united tribes of Israel under the leadership of Joshua, in a few short campaigns, as a result of which all the original inhabitants of Canaan were exterminated with only a few exceptions. The two accounts are directly contradictory in regard to the fate of cer-

tain cities, e.g., Jerusalem. According to Josh. 15:63 and Judg. 1:21, it was not captured at this time but was inhabited by the Jebusites down to the time when these verses were written. But according to Josh., chap. 10, and Judg. 1:8, the king of Jerusalem was killed by Joshua, the city itself was burned, and the inhabitants were exterminated. From II Sam. 5:6–10 we know that the former version is correct, for Jerusalem was not taken till the time of David. We find similar inconsistencies in regard to the Philistine cities (compare Judg. 1:18 with the verse that follows). Other instances might be cited.

The best explanation of these discrepancies is that the Books of Joshua and Judges were compiled from ancient sources by editors who lived at a later time, when the conquest was a thing of the past. By this time the perspective was lost and events of several centuries were, in common thought, compressed into one generation, and the work of many unnamed leaders was ascribed to the first and best known, i.e., to Joshua. In this lesson we shall aim to follow the older narrative.

(3) *Historical situation.*—We know more concerning the land of Canaan around 1400 B.C. than we know about its condition in the time of Joshua, a century or two later. This is because a few years ago a great many clay tablets were discovered at Tel-el-Amarna, and these proved to be letters from

princes in Canaan to the king of Egypt. At the time of these letters the land was under a great many petty kings each ruling a city and its independent towns, but all owning allegiance to Egypt. When Egypt was strong and aggressive these princes sent tribute regularly, but when there was a weak Pharaoh on the throne, they quickly threw off the Egyptian yoke.

One remarkable thing about this correspondence is the fact, that although it is directed to the king of Egypt, it is written in the script of Babylon, showing that long before this, Babylonian influence had been strongly felt in this country.

Even a century before the arrival of Joshua, there was an extensive invasion of Canaan in progress. A people called the Chabiri were threatening the north. Other tribes were menacing the southern cities. Many importunate pleas for help were sent to Pharaoh. For example, here is an extract from a letter written by a certain vassal of Egypt, named Abdi-Khiba:

> If you do not listen to me, all the dependent princes will be lost, and my lord the King will have no more dependent princes. Let the King therefore turn his attention to the princes and let my lord the King send troops. The King has no longer any territory. If troops come in this year the territory will remain my lord the King's; but if no troops come, the territory of my lord the King is lost.

This invasion was probably in essential respects like the one under Joshua, and hence these letters

cast much light on the time we are studying. For instance, the letters do not ask for many troops; forty or fifty soldiers or even less are considered enough to defend a city. This is because the nomads have no battering rams and hence cannot carry a walled city by assault, unless it is wholly undefended or taken by surprise. Nor can they starve a city into surrender, for the flocks they bring with them soon eat up all the grass in the vicinity and they must move on, lest they themselves starve.

The nomads can, however, sometimes annoy a town so much that it will permit them to settle in the neighborhood, and will at the same time pay blackmail to secure freedom from annoyance.

From the above facts we can better understand the Hebrew invasion. Jericho seems to have offered no resistance; Ai was taken by stratagem; Bethel was captured by surprise; Hebron has no walls today and probably did not have any when Caleb took it; Debir was only a village. The strong cities of the plains could not be captured. Recent excavations show us why. Gezer, for instance, had a wall 14 ft. thick and 12 ft. high, while Megiddo had a wall 28 ft. thick. No wonder the nomads could not take such fortresses! Yet there were some cities that preferred to come to terms with the Hebrews, namely Gibeon, Chephira, Beeroth, and Kiriath-jearim (Josh., chap. 9).

Probably some cities in the north did the same, allowing the nomads to drift in around them as sand blows in from the desert.

(4) *Neighboring nations.*—Though the Israelites strenuously denied any kinship with the Canaanites, we learn from the Tel-el-Amarna letters that the Phoenicians, Canaanites, and Hebrews spoke the same language and were probably of the same race, only the two former were settled in Canaan before the other people arrived and had reached a higher stage of civilization. The Philistines were a foreign people who entered Canaan about the same time as the Israelites, but from another direction. The facts of their migration are, however, very obscure.

From the list of cities in Judg., chap. 1, which the Hebrews could not take we see that their conquests were really very modest at this time. The older inhabitants kept almost all the valleys and plains where grain will grow, while the newcomers had to be content with the hills where grass does not last through the summer. The cities on the great trade routes of the world were not touched by the invaders. The Phoenicians continued to hold the best seaports and were even then laying the foundations of their future commercial greatness. The great caravan routes between Egypt and Damascus, Babylonia and Assyria passed through the Canaanite cities, some of which, like Megiddo, Taanach, and Gezer, are frequently mentioned in the Amarna

letters. But to the Israelites even the highlands seemed a great improvement over the barren desert, and they began to terrace their hills and to cultivate the vine and the olive, content to let the world pass by them on the lowlands. Yet the Israelites were profoundly influenced by their neighbors from whom they learned agriculture and other arts of civilization, and at the same time imbibed new religious ideas which often proved morally disastrous. The history of these effects of external influences is a long and interesting part of the Bible record.

(5) *The Kenizzites and Kenites.*—It has often been disputed whether Othniel was Caleb's brother or his nephew, for the Hebrew of Judg. 1:13 is ambiguous. Scholars think however that Caleb, Othniel, and Achsah are really the names of clans in the Kenizzite tribe, which settled in Hebron and Debir and gradually coalesced so completely with the tribe of Judah that, in the later narratives, Caleb is represented as a Judahite.

The story of the marriage of Othniel and Achsah and the latter's dowry of springs of water is supposed to have arisen in an attempt to explain why the *Upper and Nether Springs* belonged to the Achsah clan rather than to the Calebites, though the springs were nearer Hebron than Debir. Between Hebron and the place we suppose to be ancient Debir, there is a valley, at the head of

which are six beautiful springs, and a mile lower down there are five others. These give rise to a stream three or four miles long, which never runs dry. These are probably the Upper and Nether springs. There are three smaller springs still farther down the valley, making fourteen in all.

The Kenites, the tribe into which Moses married while he was in Midian, are said to have accompanied the Israelites and to have made their home south of the Kenizzites, where they continued their nomadic life.

(6) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Review the accounts of the capture of Jericho and Ai.

b) Explain how the tribes separated after this to fight for themselves.

c) Tell the story of Caleb's capture of Hebron from the three giants Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai (Josh. 15:13–19; Judg. 1:12–15).

d) Tell the story of Othniel and Achsah, explaining the meaning of the legend.

e) Tell how the Josephites surprised and took Bethel (Judg. 1:22–25).

f) Review the connection of Caleb with the twelve spies (Num. 13:30), and show that the account of Caleb's capture of Hebron is the sequel, and is intended to teach the rewards of faith.

(7) *Notebook.*—A map of Palestine is to be colored to show the elevations. Use the following

scheme of colors: 0 to 600 ft., green; 600 to 1,500 ft., orange; 1,500 to 3,000 ft., leave natural color; over 3,000 ft., brown; below sea-level, yellow; seas, blue. In connection with this lesson color only the higher portions, in order to show how much land was conquered at this time. Use the brown crayon for areas bounded by . . . . . ; then leave uncolored those portions adjoining and bounded by - - - - ; lastly, color the areas next in order and bounded by — · — · — · , using the orange crayon.

CHAPTER XIV

THE VICTORY OF DEBORAH AND BARAK OVER THE CANAANITES

Scripture: Judg., chaps. 4, 5

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—The strength of the Canaanite cities was so great that the northern tribes of Israel were in a very unhappy condition. They did not dare appear on the highways but were forced to keep to the by-paths. However, under the leadership of Barak and the inspiration of a woman named Deborah, six tribes made a stand against their enemies near the towns Tanaach and Megiddo. Here by the aid of a violent storm the Canaanites were routed. Their captain, Sisera, stopped in his flight at the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, and asked for a drink of water. She brought him instead a large bowl of milk, and apparently as he was lifting this to his mouth, she struck him on the head and he fell lifeless at her feet.

(2) *Two versions of the story.*—Two versions of the story are given: one in prose in Judg., chap. 4 the other in poetry in Judg., chap. 5. The latter is the older, in fact it is considered to be the oldest complete example of Hebrew literature. It is therefore to be followed in preference to the other

version, from which it differs in several details, e.g., as regards the number of tribes engaged, the rank of Sisera, and the manner in which he met his death.

(3) *The authorship of the poetic version.*—The triumphal ode in Judg., chap. 5, is usually ascribed to Deborah, because in vs. 7 it reads, "Until that I Deborah arose." However, this sentence may also be translated, "Until thou didst arise, Deborah," a rendering which agrees better with vs. 12, where both Deborah and Barak are addressed in the second person and with vs. 15 where they are mentioned in the third person. The first verse, which seems to attribute the song to the two leaders jointly, is a later editorial addition. Probably, therefore, the ode was not written by Deborah herself, but by some contemporary poet. On account of the great age of this poem many parts of it are hard to translate, yet in spite of these difficulties, the strength and beauty of the song are very striking.

(4) *The rival armies.*—Six of the tribes of Israel responded to Deborah's call to battle. Three tribes, namely Ephraim, Benjamin, and Machir or Manasseh, came from the south of the battlefield. The other three, Zebulun, Issachar, and Naphthali, lived north of it. Reuben and Gilead were summoned from beyond Jordan, but did not come. Neither did Dan and Asher answer the call. No

mention is made of Judah and Simeon; evidently they were not expected to come. Barak's army numbered about forty thousand men, few of whom had either shields or spears. We may suppose, therefore, that they were armed with slings, ox-goads, and the like.

Against these the Canaanites came out with their chariots and well-armed soldiery under the lead of Sisera. Judg., chap. 4, represents Sisera as the captain of Jabin, king of Hazor, but this is evidently due to the confusion of this event with the expedition against Jabin described in Josh. 11:1–13. From Judg. 5:28–30 we see that Sisera is himself a king, no doubt the most important of the kings engaged in this encounter.

(5) *The battlefield.*—The battle was fought on the plain of Esdraelon near Tanaach and Megiddo on the south bank of the river Kishon. A sudden storm of rain seems to have come on when the armies were facing each other. This threw the Canaanites into confusion by making the ground too soft for their chariots and horses. While their horses were plunging madly about, the Hebrew footmen, who could still move quickly over the moistened ground, attacked them and forced them to retreat. Meanwhile the Kishon, receiving as it does the drainage from Carmel, Gilboa, Tabor, and other mountains, and from the whole plain as well, had become a raging torrent. When the fleeing

Canaanites tried to ford this river they were carried away and drowned.

A somewhat similar event happened on the same plain on April 16, 1799, in a battle between Napoleon and the Turks, who, under Abdallah Pasha, were marching to the relief of Acre, which Napoleon was besieging. Many of the Turks were drowned in an attempt to cross a tributary of the Kishon.

(6) *The death of Sisera.*—The prose account of this event represents Jael as driving a tent pin through Sisera's temple as he lay, covered by a rug, asleep in her tent, after she had invited him in, refreshed him with milk, and assured him of his safety. This makes her violate the strict rules of oriental hospitality and this part of the story has therefore always been a stumbling-block.

But in the poetic version Jael seems to strike Sisera at the tent door, immediately after she has given him the milk, probably while he is raising the huge bowl to his lips, before he has tasted the milk and therefore before he is really under the protection due to a guest. The difficulty lies in the fact that the Hebrew words translated "workman's hammer" (Judg. 5:26) are really unknown to us and so we cannot tell whether the words refer to the "pin" mentioned in the first line of the verse or to some other implement. At any rate it is emphatically stated in the next verse that he

fell down at her feet, which precludes the idea that he was already lying on the ground.

The bowl Jael offered contained sour milk, which is said to be very refreshing and is the best drink the nomads have.

(7) *Sisera's palace.*—Judg. 5:28–30 gives us an exquisite picture of Sisera's palace where the Queen Mother forgets her anxiety for the return of her son by talking with her ladies of the spoil he will bring. These women are naturally interested most in the captive maidens and in the dyed stuffs and rich embroideries.

(8) *The result of the battle.*—This victory probably did not enable the Israelites to subjugate any of the Canaanite towns, but it must have given them much more freedom and independence. Besides it renewed their confidence in Jehovah and went a long way toward promoting a greater unity among the tribes.

(9) *Suggested treatment of the lesson.*—

a) Review the previous chapter and show that the present chapter also deals with the struggles of the Israelites with their neighbors.

b) Explain the conditions that brought on the battle.

c) Contrast the rival armies.

d) Describe the conflict.

e) Tell the story of the flight and death of Sisera.

f) Read portions of the poem aloud with the class.

g) Picture Sisera's mother waiting for him in the palace.

h) Point out the value of Deborah's faith and inspiration; the patriotism of the tribes that "offered themselves willingly," and the selfishness of those that refused to help. Suggest ways in which our country calls for service. Are there some who selfishly fail to respond to the call?

(10) *Notebook.*—Continue work on the map by coloring green that portion of the land which is above sea-level and less than 600 ft. high, namely: the plain of Esdraelon, the coastal plain, and portions of the Jordan valley.

CHAPTER XV

GIDEON'S VICTORY OVER THE MIDIANITES

Scripture: Judg., chaps. 6–8

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—For seven years the Israelites were troubled by the Midianites and other nomad peoples who entered the land at harvest time and carried off the crops. Finally a young man named Gideon attacked the invaders at night with a force of only three hundred men, but as the enemy supposed that they were surrounded by a large army, they fled in confusion. The Israelites pursued them and caught and killed their kings.

(2) *The two strands of the story.*—When one reads the story of Gideon in Judg., chap. 6–8, one is conscious of certain repetitions and variations in it. Especially is this so when, after reading of the capture and death of one pair of kings which seems to end the conflict, another pair is still to be dealt with. The explanation of this is that the compiler of the book has combined in these chapters two somewhat different versions of the event. These two strands may be separated into complete narratives as follows.

(3) *First version.*—Gideon (whose brothers have been killed by the Midianites) is beating out

sheaves in a wine-press, to escape the notice of the invaders, when a messenger of Jehovah appears to him and bids him free Israel. The messenger silences Gideon's doubts by bringing fire out of the rock to burn the food Gideon offers him. Thereupon Gideon builds an altar which he calls *Jehovah Shalom* ("Jehovah is well disposed").

Gideon then blows a trumpet and his own clan, the Abiezrite, gathers round him. They set out and encamp near to the Midianites. That night Gideon is reconnoitering with his servant when he is encouraged by a dream he hears one Midianite tell another. Gideon then returns to his own camp and gathers his men for a night attack. Each of his followers carries a torch hidden in a jar till at a signal the jars are broken and the torches are lifted high, while the men shout, "For Jehovah and for Gideon." The Midianites flee in confusion. Gideon pursues them across the Jordan and in his hunger asks bread at Succoth and Penuel but is refused. However, he manages to overtake the Midianites and kills their kings Zebah and Zalmunna in revenge for his brothers. He also takes vengeance on Succoth and Penuel. On his return he asks his comrades for the gold rings they have captured and of these he makes an image which he sets up in Ophrah, where he lives to an old age surrrounded by many wives and children.

(4) *Second version.*—In the distress due to the Midianite invasion a prophet rebukes the Hebrews for their faithlessness to Jehovah. That same night Gideon is moved by a divine summons to break down the altar of Baal and erect an altar to Jehovah instead. The people of the place are infuriated at him for this, but are quieted by his father, Joash. From this incident Gideon gets the name *Jerub-baal* ("Baal strives").

On the approach of the Midianites Gideon asks for an assurance that God will deliver Israel by him and receives the sign of the dew and the fleece, which is repeated the next night with reversed conditions. He then gathers a force of 32,000 but reduces this to 300 by two expedients. A night attack is then made in which each Israelite blows a trumpet. This alarms the Midianites and they flee. The other tribes join Gideon in the pursuit and the Ephraimites cut off the enemy's escape and slay the Midianite kings Oreb and Zeeb. The anger of the Ephraimites at not being summoned sooner is appeased by Gideon's tactfulness. He then returns to his home, having refused to be made king.

(5) *Comment on the first version.*—Grain was usually threshed on leveled floors on hilltops or other places where there would be enough wind to carry away the chaff. From such a point a man could be seen a long way off. Gideon, therefore,

was threshing in a wine-press, which was an excavation in the hillside, and hence a place where he would not so easily be detected by the Midianites.

The angel in this story is the same as Jehovah himself as is evident from Judg. 6:14, 16, 23. The term "angel of Jehovah" is regularly used in the old legends for a manifestation of the Deity in human form, or by an audible voice, as a careful study of the following passages will show: Gen. 16:7–14; 21:17–19; 22:11–18; 31:11–13; 32:24–30 (cf. Hos. 12:3, 4); Exod. 3:2 ff.; Judg. 13:21, 22 (cf. Gen., chaps. 18, 19). In these appearances, or theophanies as they are often called, unless the Deity announces Himself at once He is always mistaken for a man. He is finally recognized, however, in one way or another. Then, as the sight of the Deity is supposed to presage death, the person visited either bemoans the fate he expects will come to him, or congratulates himself on being still alive.

The food Gideon offered was not intended as a sacrifice but as a refreshment for the stranger, whom he did not recognize till after the food was miraculously consumed. (The latter part of 6:17 is here considered to be a later insertion, as it is out of harmony with vs. 22, and the narrative is complete without it.)

In the interpretation of the Midianite's dream the barley cake is taken to represent the Israelite,

because it is the food of farmers, while the tent is a natural symbol of the Bedouin.

The gold rings which Gideon asked for were earrings which were worn by the men of the desert. The weight of the rings was seventeen hundred shekels, about seventy pounds. In Gen. 24:22 a ring is mentioned which weighed half a shekel. The gold Gideon thus received was made into an ephod, which here seems to mean an idol.

(6) *Comment on the second version.*—The method Gideon used to reduce his army still further, after sending home all who were afraid, was a very curious one. It has been much confused by the position of the phrase "putting their hand to their mouth" in 7:6. This phrase is not in the Greek version and probably was not in the original Hebrew version. If it does belong in this verse it should stand at the end, where it would make sense. The three hundred were the ones who did not kneel but lay flat on the ground to drink. Why they were chosen the author does not tell us, though the commentaries are full of suggestions on the subject, most of them based on the misplaced phrase.

Oreb was slain at a rock which thereafter bore his name. This rock is referred to in Isa. 10:26. Zeeb gave his name to a wine-press. It is not now possible to locate these landmarks. Oreb means Raven and Zeeb means Wolf.

(7) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Describe the conditions produced by the inroads of the Midianites.

b) Tell the first version of the victory of Gideon.

c) Tell the second version of this story.

d) Have the pupils compare the two versions to see how much they have in common. (The summary in paragraph 1 gives nearly all the points in which the two accounts agree. Of course it is not distinctly stated in the first version how large Gideon's band was. It was made up, however, of his own clan, and probably numbered about three hundred.)

e) Consider the words of the angel to Gideon and make it evident that we have just as clear calls to duty through our consciences. Explain how much was accomplished by a handful of men, showing the value of courage and pointing out that we never know what we can do until we try.

(8) *Notebook.*—Color yellow the remaining portion of the map, namely that which is below sea-level. In the completed map develop the fact that the land of Palestine consists of five longitudinal strips; first, a low coastal plain, then a strip of low hills, then of highlands, then a deep depression, and lastly another strip of highland.

CHAPTER XVI

THE REIGN OF ABIMELECH

Scripture: Judg., chap. 9

(1) *Summary of the story.*—Among Gideon's many wives was a Canaanite woman who did not live with her husband in Ophrah but remained in her father's house at Shechem. She had a son named Abimelech, who, after his father died, went to Ophrah with a band of ruffians and killed his half-brothers, the seventy sons of Gideon, except the youngest named Jotham, who managed to escape.

The Shechemites then proclaimed Abimelech as their king, whereupon Jotham taunted them from Mt. Gerizim in a clever fable of the trees' experience in choosing a king. At the end of three years the Shechemites revolted against Abimelech, but their rebellion was short-lived, for he razed their city and sowed it with salt. He perished, however, in attacking Thebez, which had joined the revolt. Here, while attempting to burn a tower, his skull was broken by a millstone thrown from above by a woman. He hastily ordered a soldier to kill him with a sword, that it might not be said that a woman had slain him.

(2) *Relations between Israelites and Canaanites.*—The story of Abimelech, which is one of the most

ancient in the Book of Judges, gives many interesting facts about the early relations between the Israelites and Canaanites.

It shows that Gideon, though an Israelite living at Ophrah, had, by reason of his prominence and consequent influence, lorded it over Shechem, a Canaanite town. Here he had a wife, who, according to a marriage custom sometimes followed, continued living with her father, and her son Abimelech belonged to his mother's people. The Canaanites were naturally restive under the dominance of an Israelite and readily fell in with Abimelech's scheme to end it. They gave him seventy shekels out of the temple treasury and with it he hired ruffians who killed the seventy sons of Gideon, who were presumably all full-blooded Israelites. Abimelech then became king of Shechem and other near-by Canaanite towns. (He seems also to have had some authority over the Israelites, but this is a difficult question to settle.)

The Canaanites soon grew tired of their half-breed king and rebelled. Abimelech was putting down the revolt with the aid of Israelite soldiers when he met his death in the manner already mentioned.

(3) *Jotham's fable.*—Mount Gerizim from which Jotham delivered his derisive fable is directly south of Shechem and is well adapted for the use to which he put it. As Thomson says:

Several lofty precipices of Gerizim literally overhang the city, any one of which would answer his purpose. Nor would it be difficult to be heard, as everybody knows who has listened to the public crier in villages on Lebanon. In the stillness of evening, after the people have returned home from their distant fields, he ascends the mountain-side above the place, or to the roof of some prominent house, and there "lifts up his voice and cries," as Jotham did; and he gives forth his proclamation with such distinctness that all can hear and understand. . . . . Jotham therefore might easily be heard by the greater part of the inhabitants of Shechem [*The Land and the Book*, Vol. II, pp. 141, 142].

According to the fable, the trees in their effort to get a suitable king choose the most useful, first the olive, then the fig, and then the vine. Finding that all these are too busy to accept the honor of "waving to and fro over the trees," they choose the bramble which bears no fruit, gives no shade, and yields no wood, and hence has abundant time for kingship. The worthless bramble, of course, represents Abimelech and the sentence attributed to the bramble on assuming regal honors intimates that Abimelech would be useless as a protector and would yet be able to ruin those who disregarded his authority, even as a fire started in a bramble might sweep down the noble cedars of Lebanon.

With a final taunt in which he expressed the hope that the Shechemites would rejoice in the shade of their bramble, Jotham ran away. His predictions

were fully borne out by the event. The trees he used in his parable are the common ones of Palestine and may still be found at Shechem.

(4) *The rebellion against Abimelech.*—The narrative would be complete and much easier to follow if the incident in which Gaal figures were omitted, for, as it stands, the second attack on Shechem after Gaal has been defeated and expelled is inexplicable and coming on the very next day hardly leaves time for the expulsion. It is supposed by some that this incident comes from another version. It is, however, true to life and full of local color. If Shechem was destroyed at this time it must have been quickly rebuilt.

The Tower of Shechem seems to have been the name of a village near Shechem. Here the people took refuge in the temple of El-Berith. But Abimelech set fire to the edifice, and a thousand men and women perished in the conflagration.

In Thebez the people shut themselves up in their citadel. Abimelech was attempting to burn this when he was killed. Though he tried to escape the ignominy of dying at the hand of a woman, later generations did not forget what had befallen him (see II Sam. 11:21). The missile hurled at him was the upper part of a hand-mill, weighing about twenty-five pounds.

(5) *Baal-berith.*—The god of the Shechemites was called Baal-berith, which means Lord of the

Covenant (9:4). The same deity is in 9:46 called El-berith, that is God of the Covenant. We know that there was a temple of El-berith in the Tower of Shechem. Perhaps there was another in Shechem itself, from the treasury of which Abimelech received seventy shekels of silver (vs. 4) and in which the Shechemites cursed Abimelech at one of the vintage festivals (vs. 27). It is not probable, however, that there were two temples to the same god so close together, and it seems more reasonable to suppose that there was only one temple and that it was situated a short distance from Shechem in the place called the Tower of Shechem.

The word Baal meaning "Lord" or "Proprietor" was not in itself a proper name and was freely applied to any god. The distinction between the various gods was made by adding some other word, usually the name of the place where he was worshiped, as Baal-Hermon. We do not know why the Shechemites called their god Lord of the Covenant. Possibly he got his name from an alliance of Canaanite towns around Shechem, or from an agreement between Israelites and Shechemites, or perhaps because he was supposed to preside over covenants in general.

In Judg. 8:33 an editor states that the Israelites deserted Jehovah to worship Baal-berith. It is possible, however, that the editor based this note on the story of Abimelech and did not realize

that at that time Shechem was a Canaanite city and had not yet become Israelite.

It is interesting to note that here, as elsewhere, the temple had a treasury which was drawn upon as occasion demanded for public purposes.

(6) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Connect with previous chapter by explaining the relationship between Abimelech and Gideon.

b) Show how Abimelech became king of Shechem.

c) Tell and explain Jotham's fable.

d) Describe the rebellion against Abimelech and tell how he met his end.

e) Point out how the crime of Abimelech bore its fruit in the collapse of his kingdom and show that anything to be permanent must be founded on right conduct.

(7) *Notebook.*—The picture represents an ancient siege and is from the monuments. It is introduced here to illustrate the battle of Abimelech and to show how he met his death. Let the pupils study its details carefully and describe an imaginary battle with such equipment as they can find in the picture. They may color the picture if they wish to do so. Have the Notebook page filled in after the picture has been discussed.

CHAPTER XVII

JEPHTHAH'S VICTORY OVER THE AMMONITES

Scripture: Judg., chaps. 11, 12

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—The Israelites beyond Jordan in Gilead had their share of misfortune, for their territory was invaded by the Ammonites. In their distress they asked Jephthah, the head of a band of marauders in the land of Tob, to lead their forces. As Jephthah had previously been outlawed from Gilead he consented to return only on condition that thereafter he should be their chief.

He then attacked the Ammonites and defeated them. As he returned in triumph his daughter met him with timbrels and dances and thus brought upon herself a sad fate, for her father had vowed, in case of victory, to offer as a sacrifice whoever first came out of his house to meet him. The girl was allowed two months' respite, and then the cruel vow was carried out.

The victory of Jephthah aroused the jealousy of the Ephraimites and they threatened to kill him, but he put them to flight and killed a great many of them as they attempted to ford the Jordan. Any fugitive who pretended not to be an Ephraimite was quickly detected by his inability to pronounce the word *shibboleth.*

(2) *Jephthah's vow.*—The revolting deed of Jephthah in offering up his own daughter shows how rude the age was in which he lived. He thought it a worse crime to break his vow than to kill his only child. The idea that such a sacrifice would please God and induce him to give victory is hard for us to understand. Some have interpreted the fate of the girl as merely a compulsory virginity, but the frequent references in the Bible to human sacrifices leave little room to doubt that Jephthah's vow was literally carried out. See Gen., chap. 22; II Sam. 21:6–9; II Kings 16:3; chap. 17; 21:6; Ezek. 20:26; Mic. 6:7; Jer. 7:31; Ps. 106:37, 38, etc.

The ready submission of the girl to her terrible fate is very touching. The maidens of Israel were accustomed to spend four days a year bewailing her untimely death, and the desire to explain the origin of this custom is one of the chief reasons why the story has been preserved to us.

(3) *The dispute with the king of Ammon.*—The long section in Judg. 11:12–28, recounting the discussion between Jephthah's messengers and the king of Ammon, is remarkable in that it seems to confuse Ammon and Moab. For example, Chemosh, the god of the Moabites, is mentioned instead of Milcom, the deity of the Ammonites (11:24). The conduct of Balak, king of Moab, is cited as a precedent (11:25), and the cities men-

tioned in vs. 26 are Moabite cities. This section also breaks the connection of the story in which it stands and is generally regarded as a late insertion to defend the right of the Israelites to the territory between the Arnon and the Jabbok.

(4) *Ephraim's jealousy.*—As in the case of Gideon, so on this occasion, Ephraim was jealous because it had had no part in the battle and therefore had no share in the spoil. But in this instance they were not met with soft words, and they had abundant reason to regret their threat to burn Jephthah's house upon him. The new chief of Gilead gathered his clansmen and defeated the men of Ephraim. Then he seized the fords of the Jordan and killed the Ephraimites as they attempted to cross to their own country, detecting them by the famous *shibboleth* test. The inability of the Ephraimites to pronounce *sh* proved their undoing.

Some interesting modern parallels are mentioned by Professor Moore:

> In the Sicilian Vespers, March 31, 1282, the French were made to betray themselves by their pronunciation of *ceci e ciceri;* those who pronounced *c* as in French (*sesi e siseri*) were hewed down on the spot. When the revolt against the French in Flanders broke out, May 25, 1302, the gates were seized, and no one was allowed to pass who could not utter the—to a French tongue unpronounceable—*scilt ende friend?* [*Commentary on Judges*, "International Critical Series," 1900, p. 308].

(5) *Parallels to the story of Jephthah's daughter.*— There is a well-known Greek legend which tells how Iphigenia, the daughter of King Agamemnon, was sacrificed by her father to appease the goddess Artemis, who had becalmed the Greek fleet on its way to Troy. There are many different versions of this story.

The custom of the daughters of Israel to commemorate the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in the year is very much like a custom that was widespread in ancient times of weeping for a dead god. For example, the Egyptians mourned the death of the god Osiris. Ezekiel (8:14) describes the women of Jerusalem weeping for Tammuz, probably the same as the god Adonis, who was worshiped and bewailed in Syria, Cyprus, and Greece. The myths about these gods seem to have arisen out of the changes of the seasons. The death of the god was connected with the coming of autumn, while the rebirth of the god was coincident with the advent of spring. Many of these customs anciently included human sacrifices, but in later times substitutes were found for the human victims.

It is possible that the custom of weeping for a dead god or goddess was practiced in Israel before the time of Jephthah, and that after the tragedy of his daughter's death, the explanation of the yearly festival of tears was gradually changed, till the

custom came to be regarded solely as a commemoration of the untimely death of the daughter of the Gileadite chieftain.

(6) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Locate the scene of the story on the map.

b) Tell how Jephthah led the Gileadites to victory over the Ammonites.

c) Describe Jephthah's home-coming, telling the story of his rash vow and of his daughter's sad fate.

d) Tell how the jealous Ephraimites were overcome because they could not pronounce *shibboleth*.

e) Describe the annual commemoration of Jephthah's daughter by the women of Israel, mentioning parallel customs in other places.

f) Contrast the times of Jephthah with our own times as to the conceptions of how to please God, and as to the value of human life. Show how the teaching of the Hebrew prophets and of Christ is largely responsible for this great advance.

g) Speak of modern carelessness with respect to human life, and call attention to our awakening conscience in this matter. Mention the prohibition of child labor, protection of workers in factories and machine shops, prevention of tuberculosis, and sanitary laws in general.

(7) *Notebook.*—Study the picture of Jephthah's daughter, and discuss it. Have the children write an appropriate title chosen from Judg., chap. 11.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SAMSON STORIES

Scripture: Judg., chaps. 13–16

(1) *Summary of the stories.*—**His birth.**—One day the wife of Manoah, a Danite, was hailed by a messenger of Jehovah, who told her that she would have a son and that he would be consecrated to God from his birth. At Manoah's request the messenger returned, confirmed his message, and disappeared in the smoke of the sacrifice Manoah provided. When the child was born he was named Samson.

His adventures at Timnath.—Samson, when grown to manhood, decided to marry a Philistine woman of Timnath, in spite of his parents' objections. During the wedding ceremonies he asked a riddle which was suggested to him by an experience of his with a lion. The answer to the riddle was coaxed out of him by his intended wife, and when he found that she had told the others, he made off in a rage before the ceremony was complete. By and by he returned with a present, but found that his betrothed had been given to his best man. In revenge he destroyed the grain of the Philistines by firebrands tied to the tails of foxes. The Philistines retaliated by burning the woman and her father's house.

Infuriated by this, Samson killed many Philistines and then fled for refuge to the mountains of Judah. Here he was bound and given over to the Philistines. But Samson broke the ropes that tied him and killed a thousand of his enemies with the jaw-bone of an ass.

His adventures at Gaza.—At another time Samson visited a woman at Gaza and the Philistines tried to entrap hin, but he carried off their city gate as far as Hebron.

Samson and Delilah.—Afterward Samson became enamored of a woman named Delilah, who lived in the valley of Sorek. The Philistines bribed her to discover the reason of his great strength. He deceived her three times, but finally told her that it was due to his uncut hair. She then shaved his hair while he was asleep, and his enemies overpowered him and put out his eyes. Finally he was taken to the temple of Dagon to amuse his captors. Here he pulled down the two main pillars of the structure and perished with a great many of the Philistines. He was buried by his kinsmen.

(2) *The theophany.*—The theophany here is very much like that in the story of Gideon. The "Angel of Jehovah" is Jehovah himself in human form (Judg. 13:22). At his first visit he is not recognized. Manoah's wife in describing him calls him a man of God, that is, a prophet, though she has

noticed his awe-inspiring face like an angel's. At his second visit he is still treated as a prophet and he is asked his name, but his identity becomes known when he ascends in the smoke of the sacrifice.

(3) *The Nazarite vow.*—Samson was what the Israelites called a Nazarite, that is he was under a vow which prevented him from cutting his hair and which forbade him to touch fresh or dried grapes, vinegar, wine, or any intoxicating drink. The law governing this vow is found in Num., chap. 6. Both men and women could consecrate themselves in this way, but usually the time was limited. In Samson's case, however, the vow was made by his mother and was to last from his birth to the end of his life.

The Nazarites were considered sacred to God, though uprightness of conduct was no more essential to the proper performance of the vow than the same is essential to an oriental "holy man" today. Religion in this form is distinct from morality, just as the two were separated in the case of Micah and the Danites. It was the great work of the Hebrew prophets to combine religion and morality, and for this we owe them a great debt of gratitude.

(4) *Samson's marriage at Timnath.*—In the account as it stands it is very hard to make out what part Samson's parents had in the wedding. At first they object, then they seem to relent and

start out with Samson for Timnath, but are not with him when he makes the preliminary arrangements. His father seems to arrive at Timnath when there is nothing left for him to do.

The confusion arises from the fact that certain expressions have been inserted here which were not in the original story. These expressions are the references to his parents in 14:5, 6, and to his father in 14:10; and the words "to take her" in 14:8. Without these we have a consistent story as follows. When Samson's parents disapprove of the Philistine woman he decides to take matters into his own hands. He goes down to Timnath, killing the lion on the way, and arranges a marriage with the woman in which she is to remain at *her* father's, since *his* parents do not want her. On his return trip he finds the honey in the lion's body, part of which he takes home to his parents. Then he goes to Timnath for his wedding, and as his relatives will have nothing to do with it he gets thirty Philistine comrades. The feast, which lasts seven days, is marred by Samson's angry departure when his riddle is answered. As the ceremony is not yet completed, the woman and her family are grossly insulted, and so her father at once gives her to Samson's best man, who was a Philistine.

When Samson got over his huff he came back and found he had lost his bride. Refusing to accept her younger sister he took vengeance with

foxes and firebrands. The rest of the story is plain.

(5) *The city gate of Gaza.*—This gate consisted of two posts sunk into the ground, making with a lintel and sill a frame for the two leaves of the door. Finding the gate barred and locked he pulled up the posts and carried the whole thing, doors, frame, and bar, on his shoulders to Hebron, about forty miles away—surely a prodigious feat!

(6) *Delilah.*—The sum offered to Delilah to entrap her husband was very large. There were five lords of the Philistines and they each offered her eleven hundred shekels of silver, which would be about $3,300 in our money, but must have seemed a great deal larger to people of that day than its equivalent does to us.

In answer to her question whether there was anything he could not break, Samson said that he would not be able to get loose if bound with seven new bowstrings. While he was asleep Delilah bound him with seven new bowstrings supplied by the Philistine lords. Then she awoke him with the cry, "The Philistines are upon thee, Samson." He broke the bowstrings with ease, and Delilah probably explained to her husband that she had been only in fun and no doubt took pains to conceal the fact that the Philistines were hiding near by to seize him if the experiment proved successful. Another test was made with new ropes, but with

the same result. Then Delilah wove the seven locks of Samson's hair into her loom, while he was asleep, and awoke him as before, only to see him pull the posts of the loom out of the ground with his hair.

Finally he told her that his strength was due to the fact that his locks had never been cut. Delilah felt confident that she now had his secret and summoned the Philistine lords who came with the money in their hands. Samson's locks were shorn off, and then he was at their mercy. They put out his eyes, bound him with fetters of brass, and made him turn a mill in the prison at Gaza.

(7) *The temple of Dagon.*—It is often stated that Dagon was represented by an idol, the upper part of which had the form of a man while the lower part was like a fish. It is true that such figures are found on the Assyrian monuments, but there is nothing to show that they had any connection with the god worshiped by the Philistines. The only reason for assuming such a connection is that the Hebrew word *dag* means fish. But we do not know that Dagon was a Hebrew word, and at any rate the Jews themselves did not know of this derivation, which was suggested first in the thirteenth century A.D. to explain the difficult and probably corrupt text of I Sam. 5:4.

The temple which Samson pulled down seems to have been at Gaza. The story attributes this final

feat of strength to the fact that his hair had grown again.

(8) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Tell the story of Samson according to the following outline: birth foretold; Nazarite vow; marriage at Timnath; the Philistines' grain burnt; the slaughter of the Philistines with the jawbone of an ass; the gates of Gaza carried off; Delilah's efforts to entrap him; Dagon's temple pulled down.

b) Point out that the Samson stories were very popular with the people, but that the deeds he did accomplished little or nothing of permanent value. Show that, though a giant in strength, he was like a spoilt child in character, always wanting his own way and coming to grief through his wilfulness. Make plain the fact that while physical strength is desirable, moral earnestness and power are more desirable.

(9) *Notebook.*—Discuss with the class the questions in the Notebook. Mention the prizefighter and the bully, and then note instances of men who have used strength to protect the weak, or accomplish worthy results. Have the Notebook page filled in by the pupils.

CHAPTER XIX

THE MIGRATION OF THE DANITES

Scripture: Judg., chaps. 17–18

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—A certain woman of the hill country of Ephraim, having lost eleven hundred pieces of silver, cursed the thief and made a vow consecrating the money to God. Thereupon her son, Micah, who had taken the silver, returned it to her. She then took two hundred pieces and had a molten image made from them. This was put into a shrine and one of Micah's sons became priest of this little temple. Later, however, a Levite was induced to take the position. About that time the Danites were looking for a new place to settle and sent five men to reconnoiter. These men lodged a night at Micah's house, met his priest, and consulted his oracle. Later when these spies were conducting a party of six hundred Danite families to a place they had recommended, they helped themselves to Micah's idol and induced his Levite to come with them. Paying no heed to Micah's protests, the company went on till they came to a small city called Laish, which they captured and burnt. They then rebuilt it, renamed it Dan, and settled there, setting up the idol they had stolen.

(2) *Micah's idol.*—Micah's mother in adding to her curse a vow of consecration, frightened her son into returning the silver, for to have kept it after that would have been sacrilege. His mother could not take back the curse she had uttered, but she tried to ward off its ill effects by saying, "Blessed be my son of Jehovah." The expression "a graven image and a molten image" (vs. 4) refers to only one idol, as is evident from the fact that the pronoun and verb which immediately follow are in the singular number. It is difficult to decide whether the ephod and teraphim of vs. 5 refer to other idols or to this one already mentioned. The latter view is favored by Judg. 18:31 which tells of the establishment of the shrine at Dan and speaks only of one image. The phrases "house of gods" (17:5) and "my gods" (18:24) may just as well be translated "house of god" and "my god."

The two hundred pieces or rather shekels of silver are equal to about $8\frac{3}{4}$ pounds troy. The image the silversmith made was no doubt intended to represent Jehovah, and there seem to have been no compunctions in Micah's mind or in the minds of the Danites against the use of such an image.

(3) *The Levite.*—This Levite was a professional priest and claimed to be a grandson of Moses (Judg. 18:30, A.R.). As he was proficient in priestly duties, such as consulting the oracle and the like,

Micah was glad to get him in place of his own son who was an amateur at the profession. Besides his keep he was to get ten shekels of silver a year and a suit of apparel. He received the title "father" just as a Roman priest does today. He was, however, a young man, and Micah treated him as if he were his own son. In spite of this kindness the Levite was easily induced to desert Micah and even carried off the image in his own hands (18:20). So long as the shrine at Dan lasted, i.e., until the captivity of the Northern Kingdom, about 734 or 731 B.C., its priests claimed descent from Moses who was of the tribe of Levi.

(4) *The Danite migration.*—The tribe of Dan first tried to locate southwest of the territory occupied by Ephraim. But as the Danites were not a strong clan they had very meager success in their conflict with the original inhabitants and could acquire only a few places in the hills. This led to the migration of a part of the tribe to the little town of Laish, which they captured without difficulty, and renamed Dan. This place is identified with the modern Tell el-Kady at the foot of Mt. Hermon. It was the most northern town in Israel. The rest of the tribe remained behind in Zorah and Eshtaol. The clan never was of much importance in Hebrew history. Its most noted hero was Samson, whose exploits probably happened after this migration,

though the record of them is placed before it in the Book of Judges.

(5) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Tell the story according to the following outline: Micah's idol and Levite; the visit of the Danite spies; their report about Laish; the migration; the theft of Micah's image; the pursuit; the capture of Laish and the settlement there.

b) Ask the pupils what they think of the idea expressed by Micah in 17:13; also what they think of the way the Levite and the Danites combined religion and theft. Compare the ideas of religion expressed in this chapter with the conception of the *prophet* Micah given in Mic. 6:8.

(6) *Notebook.*—The picture is from the tomb of the Egyptian Khnumhotpu and represents Asiatics coming into Egypt. There are other figures in the original besides those introduced here. The migration of the Danites probably resembled this scene. The original colors are as follows:

Brown: the skin of the people, the bow and quiver, bag and harp of the man; the baggage of the donkey on the left; the shoes of the women, and the upright baggage on the second donkey between the boys.

Red: lines on the men's loin-cloths; border of shields on first donkey; background of dress of woman 1 (counting from left) border of dress of woman 2, dots of dress on woman 3, loin-cloth of

boy walking; clothes of boys on donkey and pack of same.

Blue: lines on dresses of women 1, and 3, lines on pack of second donkey.

Gray: donkeys; dots on dress of woman 2.

CHAPTER XX

SHILOH

Scripture: Judg. 21:16–25; I Sam. 1—7:2

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—The Tent of Meeting, which had accompanied the Israelites on their desert wanderings, was, according to the tradition recorded in Josh. 18:1, finally set up at Shiloh, and the final allotment of the land was completed there.

In the time of the Judges a yearly festival occurred at Shiloh, a feature of which was a dance by the maidens of the place. On one occasion a number of Benjamites who were unable to get wives in any other way lay in ambush in the vineyards until the dance began and then carried off the maidens for wives.

When Eli was priest at Shiloh, a young boy named Samuel was brought to this sanctuary and was dedicated to the service of Jehovah in accordance with a vow made by his mother before his birth. While still a lad his fame spread throughout the land on account of a revelation received by him from Jehovah.

In Eli's old age misfortune befell Shiloh. The Ark was captured by the Philistines in the battle of Ebenezer, and Hophni and Phinehas, Eli's sons who were carrying the Ark, were killed. When

Eli heard the news he fell backward off his seat and died. The sanctuary at Shiloh was ultimately destroyed, perhaps by the Philistines, though of this we are not certain.

The Philistines kept the Ark for a while, but finally sent it back because they believed it was the cause of the plagues that afflicted them. It remained a long time at Kiriath-jearim, until taken to Jerusalem by David.

(2) *The location of Shiloh.*—The ancient Shiloh is commonly identified with the modern Seilun which lies in a secluded valley off the main road from Bethel to Shechem. On the surrounding hills there are still signs of the terraces for the vineyards where the Benjamites hid. There is also a level place 77 ft. wide and 412 ft. long, where the sanctuary may have stood. In a little valley to the northeast there is a fountain with abundant water.

From the references to door-posts and doors in I Sam. 1:9; 3:15, and from the use of the word temple, it is inferred that the Tent was replaced by a permanent building. Some suppose, however, that II Sam. 7:6 rules out such an inference. The destruction of the shrine at Shiloh is referred to in Jer. 7:12, 14 and 26:6, 9; but is not described in such a way that we can tell when it happened. It is generally supposed to have occurred while the Philistines were masters of the land.

(3) *Customs at Shiloh.*—From the first two chapters of the First Book of Samuel we learn many interesting details about the practices at Shiloh. Samuel's father Elkanah was accustomed to come to Shiloh each year with his whole family, except when the children were too young to bring.

When a man offered an animal in sacrifice to God, the fat, which was considered to be the richest part, was burnt by the priests that the Deity might smell the offering and thus enjoy it. The rest was put into a pot and boiled for the worshipers, a stipulated portion going to the priests. At Shiloh, however, the sons of Eli were high-handed in their treatment of the people. They sent a servant around with a three-pronged hook which he plunged into the pot where the meat was boiling, and whatever adhered to the hook he carried off for his masters. Sometimes, indeed, he insisted on taking raw meat for the priests in order that they might roast it, for they did not like to have it boiled. These insolent proceedings were much resented by the people. The yearly sacrifice was in general, however, a glad occasion, with eating and drinking and dancing. It probably occurred at the time of the vintage.

The way in which the Benjamites got wives for themselves at the festival at Shiloh (Judg. 21:16–25) is very similar to the method employed by the Romans in procuring Sabine wives at the festival of the Consualia (Livy i. 9).

(4) *The birth and consecration of Samuel.*—We are not to suppose from the fact that Elkanah had two wives that polygamy was common in Israel. Of course the chief of a clan usually had several wives, but the ordinary man was generally content with one wife. The reason Elkanah had two was probably because Hannah, his first wife, was childless. This would have been considered a valid reason for divorcing her, but Elkanah loved her and would not put her away. Yet because of the strong eastern desire for offspring he married another wife named Peninnah. She had children, and used to taunt Hannah on her childless condition. This led Hannah to make a vow that if God would bless her with a son she would consecrate him to Jehovah all his life. Her wish was granted, and she called the child *Samuel*. As soon as she could part with him she brought him to Shiloh and handed him over to the care of Eli. She continued to come to Shiloh year by year and on each visit brought her son a little robe.

The so-called Song of Hannah in chap. 2 is a hymn which the editor has inserted from some other source. There are only a few expressions that are at all appropriate to Hannah, and the poem as a whole is very similar to the hymns composed by the Jews after the sad experiences of the Babylonian exile.

(5) *Samuel's vision.*—The Book of Genesis is full of accounts of how God appeared and spoke to the patriarchs in dreams at night, e.g., Gen. 15:12–16; 26:24; 28:10–17; 31:24; 46:1–4. Such a dream was regarded as a sufficient guaranty that the place where it occurred was sacred, and was thought to establish a presumption that dreams of that sort might be expected there more commonly than in ordinary places. Similarly a temple was thought to be a very favorable place for such visions, and there were several temples in Egypt and Greece where pilgrims came for dreams.

Very probably the *call of Samuel* was classified by his contemporaries with the dreams of the patriarchs in which they heard the voice of the Deity. The boy was sleeping at the time in the most favorable place for such a vision, namely, in the temple where the Ark was.

It is not an unusual occurrence in dreams to hear oneself called so distinctly that one attempts to respond. This was Samuel's experience. He heard a voice so plainly that it woke him up, and he ran to Eli supposing that the latter had called him. This happened three times, till Eli concluded that Jehovah was endeavoring to speak to the boy, and told him to say, "Speak, Jehovah; for thy servant heareth," if he heard the voice again.

Samuel obediently lay down again and now dreamed that Jehovah was standing and calling

to him. He answered as Eli had instructed him, and then Jehovah told him that punishment was going to overtake the house of Eli. Next morning Eli required him to tell his dream, and the fame of the event soon spread through the land.

(6) *The Ark captured by the Philistines.*—In a certain encounter between the Israelites and the Philistines the former had been defeated. They thought their cause would be helped by the presence of the Ark, so they sent to Shiloh and Eli's sons Hophni and Phinehas brought the Ark into the camp. But the Israelites were again defeated, the Ark was captured, and Hophni and Phinehas were killed.

The Philistines took the Ark to Ashdod, and then to Gath, and later to Ekron. The arrival of the Ark in these places was coincident with a great plague. We cannot tell what this pestilence was, though many suggestions have been made on the subject. One theory is that it was an epidemic of the bubonic plague. It is sufficient for us to recognize that it was a severe affliction from which many died suddenly while others got well.

The Philistines themselves were not sure whether this epidemic was due to the presence of the Ark or had some other explanation (I Sam. 6:9). They thought they could decide the question by following the plan suggested by their priests and diviners, namely, to put the Ark on a new cart drawn by

cows whose calves were shut up at home, and to watch which way the cows went. The fact that these cows went down the road to Beth-shemesh lowing as they went proved to the satisfaction of the Philistines that the Ark had been the cause of their disaster. Similar superstitions that sickness is due to the anger of gods and can be averted by offerings still prevail in many parts of the world, and in severe epidemics people repair temples and enrich shrines instead of improving their sanitation and using other efficient methods of fighting the germs of disease.

A calamity of some sort befell Beth-shemesh and seventy men perished. (The words "and fifty thousand men" in I Sam. 6:19 are almost certainly a mistake and do not appear in some of the ancient manuscripts and versions.) This misfortune was attributed to the fact that these men had looked into the Ark and the people of Beth-shemesh decided to get rid of the perilous symbol of Jehovah. The men of Kiriath-jearim were induced to come and take it to their own town and there it remained till David took it to Jerusalem.

(7) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Picture as vividly as possible the annual festival at Shiloh mentioning the following features: the pleasant situation of the temple in a valley surrounded by vine-clad hills; the Ark, the most venerated possession of the sanctuary; the old

white-haired priest Eli, "sitting upon his seat by the door-post of the temple"; the cloud of smoke arising from the burning fat on the altar; the pots in which the meat was boiling; the squabbles about the priests' portions; the throngs of worshipers feasting by families; the dance of the maidens.

b) Tell how the Benjamites got wives for themselves at one of these festivals.

c) Narrate the story of Hannah's vow and the consecration of Samuel. Tell about his dream in the temple.

d) Explain how the Ark was captured and why it was brought back.

e) Point out that the Israelites served God with gladness and that we should do likewise, though we do not need to imitate the ways in which they expressed their joy. Speak of the obedience and respect Samuel showed to Eli. Speak of the superstitions about disease that still burden a large portion of the human race in heathen countries, and show that it is our duty to help them by sharing with them the knowledge we possess.

(8) *Notebook.*—Study the picture, and paste it upon the page. Note that this is the idea of another great artist, and tell the pupils something of Doré and his work.

CHAPTER XXI

LIFE AND CUSTOMS IN THE TIME OF THE JUDGES

Scripture: Deut. 32:9–14

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—When the Israelites entered Canaan, the tribes, with few exceptions, gave up their tents and lived in houses. They also took up agriculture, learning the art from their Canaanite neighbors. Their food consequently became more abundant and varied than it had been in the desert. At the same time they began to make progress in certain handicrafts.

(2) *Houses.*—The tribes Reuben and Simeon never seem to have abandoned the old nomadic life, and the same is true of the Kenites, who always exhibited an antipathy to civilization.

The houses which the other tribes built or appropriated for themselves were probably in most respects much like those found in Palestine today. In the hills, where the Hebrew settlements were chiefly to be found at this time, limestone was plentiful, and was the common building-material. The roof was flat and was made of logs or boughs covered with clay and straw so as to be water-tight. In the plains the building-material was mud or sun-dried bricks.

The poorer houses consisted of a single room, which often sheltered the cattle as well as the family. The floor was usually simply the earth pounded hard, but sometimes the part reserved for the cattle was somewhat lower than the rest of the floor. The larger houses were built around a courtyard, where various household duties were performed. Even if the house consisted of only two rooms, these were placed so as to have a space between them and were then joined with walls so as to make a court.

The houses were not isolated from one another, but were gathered in towns and villages. This was done for mutual protection against nomads, and also because of the scarcity of water, the village location being frequently determined by the presence of a spring. The larger towns had walls to keep out enemies, and the villages outside a walled city were called its "daughters." These had often to be abandoned in time of invasion (see Judg. 5:7, margin).

(3) *Ploughing and sowing.*—During the time of the Judges the best regions for agriculture were not in the hands of the Israelites, yet they began to farm such lands as they had, their chief products being wheat and barley among the grains, and olives, figs, and grapes among the fruits.

The ploughing and sowing took place in October and November after the early rains. Sometimes

the seed was sown first and then ploughed in, or it was scattered after the land had been ploughed. The plough itself was a light affair easily carried on a man's shoulder. Oxen were ordinarily employed to pull the plough as is intimated in the famous couplet from the Samson stories:

> If ye had not ploughed with my heifer,
> Ye had not found out my riddle.

Instead of a whip a goad was used in driving the oxen. This was a stick about 8 ft. long, with a sharp iron point at one end with which the animals were prodded when they needed urging. On the other end there was sometimes an iron scraper for cleaning the plough. It was such an implement that Shamgar used in his encounter with the Philistines (Judg. 3:31), and no doubt the ox-goad frequently did duty as a spear when the peasants were summoned to battle.

(4) *Harvest.*—In the higher ground, barley ripened in May and wheat in June, the season being a month or so later than in the lowlands. The stalks of the grain were either pulled out by the roots or cut with a sickle, and the sheaves were carried by men or donkeys to the threshing-floor. This was a level place circular in form and about 30 ft. in diameter, located where it would catch the wind. Here the sheaves were spread out and cattle or donkeys were driven round and round over them. When this process had gone on long

enough, what had been already threshed was gathered in a heap in the center of the floor and more was spread out in its place.

After threshing came winnowing. The mixed straw, grain, and chaff were tossed into the air by means of a pitchfork or wooden shovel. The grain, being the heaviest, fell back to the same spot; the straw, however, was blown a few yards away, and the chaff, being lightest of all, was carried still farther. The grain was then carried home in baskets, sifted carefully to remove foreign materials and other seeds, then washed, and laid out on the flat roof to dry. Finally it was stored away, part in baskets for immediate use, the rest in underground hiding-places.

While the grain was on the threshing-floors the owners usually slept near by to protect their property.

(5) *Figs.*—There were three seasons of figs each year, but the most important crop was gathered in August and September. The figs were eaten fresh in these months, and many more were dried on the roofs and stored away for winter use.

(6) *Grapes.*—The vines grew commonly on the hillsides, which were terraced to receive them. The grapes ripened in August and were gathered in September and the early part of October. A great many were eaten fresh at this time; many more were dried for raisins, and large quantities were

made into wine, the process being as follows: The grapes were carried in baskets from the vineyard and thrown into the wine-press. This was a square or oblong trough dug in the rock, leading to a smaller and lower trough. Then men, women, and children trampled the grapes with their bare feet, singing and shouting the while. The juice flowed out into the smaller trough from which it was ladled into vessels. Then it was allowed to ferment into wine while some was made into vinegar by letting the wine sour.

(7) *Olives.*—The olive berries were gathered in October, being picked by hand from the larger branches, the rest being knocked off with a stick. Part of the crop was used for oil, which was extracted either by treading the olives with the feet (Mic. 6:15), or by pounding them in a mortar (Exod. 27:20), or by grinding them in a stone mill. Both olives and olive oil were much used as food. "Bread and olives in Syria correspond to the milk and porridge of Scotland" (Mackie).

(8) *The harvest festival.*—The end of the summer when all the products had been gathered in was a time of great rejoicing and was called the Feast of the Ingathering. Such a festival at Shechem is referred to in Judg. 9:27 and probably the feast at Shiloh occurred at the same time of year (Judg. 21:19). During the vintage the people commonly slept in booths in the vineyards, and hence the

festival later became known as the Feast of Tabernacles. It corresponds to our own harvest-home celebrations and annual Thanksgiving Day.

(9) *Bread-making.*—The wheat was usually ground into flour by a hand-mill, which consisted of two circular stones about eighteen inches in diameter, laid one on top of the other. The upper stone had a handle near its circumference by which it could be revolved round a peg projecting from the lower stone and thus crushed the wheat that was placed between the stones. The work was commonly done by two women or girls sitting at opposite sides of the mill and each holding the handle with one hand. The upper part of such a mill was the missile that broke Abimelech's skull (Judg. 9:53).

The bread was not made into the form of our loaves but into flat cakes or rolls. The simplest form of baking was to lay the dough on hot ashes or stones. Another method was to start a fire inside a jar and when the jar was hot to lay the dough on the outside. Still another way was to dig a hole in the ground and line it with clay. This was filled with fuel and the bread baked by laying it on the sides of this simple oven.

(10) *Handicrafts.*—The time of the farmer was pretty well filled from May to November, first with harvesting and threshing the grain, then with gathering and drying the fruits and making wine

and oil, and finally with the ploughing and sowing for the next year. During these months no military operations were undertaken unless the harvest was threatened by invaders.

In the other five months of the year there was time for various occupations. In building and repairing their houses they learned the rudiments of masonry and carpentry. The art of the blacksmith became important because of the necessity of having iron points for ploughs and other implements. In the story of Micah we read of a founder or silversmith, and a similar artificer must have been employed in making Gideon's ephod. The manufacture of pottery was also practiced.

The women had probably been acquainted with the art of spinning and weaving while still in the wilderness. This handicraft was continued, and the dyed and embroidered garments of the Israelites were coveted in the palace of Sisera (Judg. 5:30).

(11) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Review chap. 6, "Nomadic Life in the Wilderness," and use it as a basis of comparison.

b) Explain the change from tents to houses.

c) Describe agricultural life in Palestine season by season.

d) Describe the grinding of grain, the making of bread, and other household occupations.

e) Describe the Feast of Ingathering and com-

pare with our modern equivalents, and explain the meaning of our Thanksgiving Day.

(12) *Notebook.*—In preparation for this lesson the teacher is expected to make the model of the sheik's house, using the diagram found in the Pupil's Notebook. Unused diagrams are to be retained with the Teacher's Manual and passed on to the next teacher who may use the volume. It will be necessary to provide a sufficient number of scissors for the class. Each pupil is to make a model of the peasant's house following the directions given in connection with the diagram. The houses made by the pupils may be collected and arranged about the house of the sheik, which the teacher will have made, so as to suggest a typical village. The Primary Department will doubtless enjoy receiving this village as a gift.

CHAPTER XXII

SACRED PLACES AND THEIR LEGENDS

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—As the Israelites became more thoroughly settled in the land many places and natural objects such as hills, tombs, wells, trees, and stones came to be regarded as sacred, and various legends grew up about them to explain their sanctity. It is probable that many or all of these objects were reverenced by the Canaanites before the Hebrew invasion, and that the newcomers simply took over the holy places along with the land, and made them their own by associating them with their own ancestors and their own deity.

The places that took the strongest hold upon the reverence of the Israelites were Hebron, Beersheba, and Bethel, and many stories of the patriarchs centered around these spots.

(2) *The Hebron stories.*—At Hebron there was a cave called the Cave of Machpelah which the Hebrews regarded with great veneration. Had one asked them why they so regarded it, the answer would have been, "Because the great ancestors of our race, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Leah and Jacob are buried there." Further inquiries as to how it became a family tomb would

have elicited answers to this effect: Abraham was encamped at Hebron when his wife Sarah died. Having no place to bury her, he bought this cave of Ephron the Hittite, paying him four hundred shekels of silver for the cave and the field and the trees (Gen., chap. 23). This then became the family burying-ground, and Jacob's body was brought all the way from Egypt and interred here (Gen., chap. 50).

There were also some sacred trees at Hebron called the "Oaks of Mamre," and the following reasons were given for considering them sacred. It was said that Abraham used to pitch his tent close to these trees, that here he had an altar and made a covenant with Jehovah (Gen., chap. 15); and that under these very trees the Deity, who had come in disguise as a man accompanied by two angels, partook of a meal prepared by Abraham, and announced that Sarah would have a son. He also listened to Abraham's plea for Sodom, promising to spare the city if ten righteous people were found in it (Gen., chap. 18).

The Cave of Machpelah is considered sacred even to this day, and is carefully guarded by the Mohammedans, who will not permit either Christians or Jews to enter it.

(3) *The Beersheba stories.*—Beersheba was at the southern extremity of Palestine on the edge of the desert. The presence of several large wells made

it an important place for the nomads even as it is today. It was one of the great sacred places, and the Israelites used to make pilgrimages to it from considerable distances.

They said that one of the wells had been dug by Abraham's servants and that here Abraham had made a covenant with Abimelech, king of Gerar (Gen. 21:32). Here Isaac was said to have built an altar in consequence of a night vision of Jehovah. Here, he, too, dug a well and renewed the covenant with Abimelech (Gen. 26:23, 26 ff.). Here Jacob stopped on his way down to Egypt and had a vision of Jehovah who promised to go with him to Egypt and to bring his family back again as a great nation (Gen. 46:1–4).

There was at Beersheba a tamarisk tree considered to be sacred because Abraham had planted it when he called on Jehovah by the name of the Everlasting God (Gen. 21:33).

(4) *The Bethel stories.*—Bethel was a very famous and important sacred place and had the advantage of a central location. It was connected with the patriarch stories in this way. They said that Abraham pitched his tent here when he first came from Ur of the Chaldees (Gen. 12:8). He came here again after his return from Egypt and repaired his altar (Gen. 13:3).

The most important Bethel stories, however, centered about Jacob's name. Here Jacob was

said to have spent a night when on his way from Beersheba to get himself a wife at his mother's home in Haran. He had slept out in the open with a stone for his pillow, and in his slumbers dreamed of a ladder stretched from earth to heaven, on which angels were going up and down. At the top of the ladder he saw Jehovah who spoke to him and promised to give him the land on which he was sleeping. When he awoke, Jacob recognized the sacred character of the place and therefore set up his stone pillow for a pillar and named the place "Bethel," which means "the house of God" (Gen., chap. 28).

Another version of this story said that Jacob had a vision at Bethel *after* he returned from Paddan-aram. These two versions are partially harmonized in Gen., chap. 35.

Bethel had also its sacred tree, celebrated as the burial-place of Rebekah's nurse, whose name was Deborah (Gen. 35:8).

(5) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—The treatment of this chapter will depend largely upon how familiar the pupils already are with these patriarch stories. If they already know them well the whole chapter can be run over rapidly. If, however, the pupils are not familiar with them, only a part of the subject can be covered at one session and it will be well to confine attention to the stories of a single sacred place.

Let the pupils imagine that they are going on a pilgrimage to one or all of these sanctuaries with the teacher as guide. Any starting-point may be chosen and the route traced on a map. The teacher will tell what is to be seen in each place and will narrate the stories connected with it, or the pupils may do so themselves if they are able. In I Sam. 10:3 we have a picture of three pilgrims going to Bethel. The aim of the lesson is to show the ideas and beliefs of the Israelites after they were settled in Canaan, in order that the pupils may feel more distinctly the atmosphere of the times about which they are studying.

a) Conduct a pilgrimage to Hebron of which the following is a brief description. Hebron is eighteen miles south of Jerusalem and is 3,000 ft. above the sea. It lies in the narrow valley of Mamre, which runs from north to south and is exceedingly rich in vineyards and olive orchards. The traditional site of the oaks of Mamre where Abraham pitched his tent is three miles north of Hebron on the Jerusalem road. The Cave of Machpelah is on the eastern side of the valley and overlooks the town. It is now covered by a Mohammedan mosque with a massive wall 40 ft. high. As this is one of the most sacred places of the Moslems it is very difficult for Jews or Christians to get within the inclosure even, and no one is allowed to enter the cave itself. On the other side of the valley opposite the mosque is

a pool, probably the one over which David hanged the murderers of Ishbosheth (Eshbaal).

Tell such of the legends of Hebron as are adapted to the age of the pupils. The stories connected with the oaks of Mamre are found in Gen., chaps. 15 and 18; while the traditions about the cave are recorded in Gen., chap. 23; 25:9; 49:28–33; chap. 50. For a more detailed description of Hebron, and of the oriental customs illustrated by the legends, see Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, Vol. I, chaps. ix–xi (popular ed.).

b) Continue the pilgrimage to Beersheba, which is thirty miles south and somewhat west of Hebron. It is a continual descent all the way. There are today several wells at Beersheba. The largest is about 13 ft. in diameter and 45 ft. to the surface of the water. Another well is about 5 ft. across. Both of these have stone drinking-troughs for watering flocks. The rims of these wells have been deeply grooved by the ropes used in drawing up the water. There are two or three other wells in use and some that are now closed.

The name Beersheba may be interpreted as "Well of the Oath," and there are two stories in Genesis to explain how it came by that name (Gen. 21:22–34; 26:23–33). The word may also be explained as "Well of the Seven," and another tradition ascribes the origin of the name to the number of

the wells. Beersheba is the scene also of an event in Jacob's life (Gen. 46:1–4).

c) Bethel is twelve miles north of Jerusalem and hence has a more central location than either Hebron or Beersheba. It is thus described by a traveler:

> One of the most singular stone formations west of the Jordan in Palestine is to be seen in the great stone field a little to the north of the modern town of Beitun, the ancient Bethel. One is here, if I may borrow an expression, "on the roof of the world." A few hundred feet to the north of this stone field you come to a divide, from which you can look north and south. You are far above Jerusalem which is visible away to the south. You look over a succession of hills and then across the huge, deep cleft of the Jordan valley to Gilead and Moab beyond. The situation is imposing. One feels a sense of awe as one stands at this point; and just here on the slope of this roof, near its summit, occurs a freak of nature so singular that it is difficult to convince one's self that nature and not man is the author. Huge stones seem to be piled one upon another to make columns nine or ten feet or more in height. In reality these columns are produced by erosion, and the different density of the strata has led to greater erosion in one part than another, so that they taper and bulge in manifold and various shapes. So strong is the resemblance to construction made by men's hands that I myself have gone to this spot, not once but many times, and examined every stone, to make sure that there could be no mistake in my impression, and I have found that others have done the same thing. . . . .
>
> Whoever stands on the hillside above Bethel, especially toward evening, if he have any sympathy with Nature and the mysticism of Nature's children in his soul, understands

with a new understanding the fascinating story of Jacob's flight when night overtook him near Bethel, and there on the height, which was so much nearer to heaven than all the country round about him, he saw the "ladder," or better, the stage-tower that reached up to heaven and the angels of God ascending and descending [Gen., chap. 28]. Surely it is a point at which heaven and earth meet. And there stand the pillars which the mighty heroes of antiquity erected; for those stones are not stones which the pigmies of the present day could pick up and set on one another. It was only the giant men of olden times who could set up as memorials of communion with God these mighty stones at this point where heaven and earth are so clearly united [John P. Peters, *Early Hebrew Story*].

(6) *Notebook.*—Locate on the map Hebron, Bethel, and Beersheba, being sure that the pupil associates the name of some patriarch with each place. Study the picture of modern Hebron, noting: the Moslem church with its minaret, which marks the traditional site of the cave of Machpelah; the Mohammedan cemetery; the cultivated hills in the background; also the foreign tourists and their tent in the foreground.

CHAPTER XXIII

STORIES ABOUT NEIGHBORING PEOPLES

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—Among all primitive peoples the story-teller has a secure place. With no competition from books, he has a clear field and is depended upon to acquaint the people with the brave deeds of old. Israel was no exception to the rule and in the early part of its settled life developed narrators of great ability whose stories have become immortal. The previous chapter has dealt with the legends that collected around the shrines; the present chapter is concerned with the stories told by the Israelites about neighboring peoples.

The Hebrew invasion of Canaan was a part of a much wider migration which extended northward from Arabia, and the Israelites acknowledged a blood relationship between themselves and the other Semitic peoples who had been in advance of them in this movement, or had been left behind, e.g., the Arameans or Syrians, the Edomites, the Moabites, the Ammonites, and the Ishmaelites. There were stories to illustrate all these relationships.

(2) *The Edom stories* (Gen. 25:19–34; 27:1–46).—Off to the south of the Dead Sea lived the

Edomites, whom the Israelites regarded as so close of kin to themselves that they declared the Edomites were descendants of Esau, Jacob's twin brother. But Esau was a little older than Jacob and yet had not obtained as good an inheritance as his younger brother. To explain this fact the story was told of how Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage (Gen. 25:27–34), and of how Jacob had fooled his father, Isaac, and had obtained for himself the blessing intended for Esau (Gen. chap. 27).

Clearly the original narrators and their auditors enjoyed hugely the fun at Esau's expense. . . . . The Israelite laughs at the shaggy, hairy, uncouth Edomites, as rough and ragged as the goats of their own wild land. . . . . In these witticisms one sees before him just the type of wild Edomite which Israel held up to laughter as Esau. The open shirt displays a breast so hairy that it looks like a goat's beard hanging down. The hairy legs below the short shirt might pass for a satyr's limbs. The hair of the head is unkempt and matted and hangs down about the face which itself is tanned and burned to dry redness by the sun. It is a type which one finds today in the region and which the town Arab—for that was what Israel had become—naturally laughs at and compares with a goat. One can almost see a group of Israelites sitting about a fire in a hut on a winter night, or out in front of it on a summer evening, listening with shouts of laughter to the narrator who tells the tale of the way in which Israel, by the advice of his cunning mother, Rebekah, deceives the old, decrepit, bleared-eyed Isaac by covering himself with goatskins so as to represent the hairy Esau. . . . .

There is the same sort of wit and apt characterization of personal appearance and tribal characterization in the description of the way in which Esau, overreached by Jacob, sells his birthright for a mess of pottage. . . . . Hungry, to fill his belly he sells the whole future [Peters, *Early Hebrew Story*, pp. 131–33].

(3) *Stories about the Arameans* (Gen., chaps. 24, 28, 29, 30, 31).—The Israelites also acknowledged close relations with the Arameans or Syrians, saying that Abraham originally came from Aram and that Rebekah, Leah, and Rachel were all Arameans.

To illustrate these relationships the Hebrews told the beautiful story of how Eliezer, Abraham's Damascene steward, got Rebekah for Isaac, bringing her all the way from Haran to Beersheba (Gen., chap. 24).

They also told how Jacob returned to his mother's home and married his cousins there, how at first he was cheated by his uncle Laban, but in the end outdid him, coming off with a great part of his uncle's flocks and even stealing his household gods (Gen., chaps. 28–31). The story in Gen. 31:45–49 explained the boundary line between the Israelites and the Arameans.

(4) *Stories about the Ishmaelites* (Gen. 16:1–16; 21:8–21).—The Hebrews expressed their relation to the Ishmaelites by saying that Ishmael was a son of Abraham by Sarah's servant Hagar, and that he was born before Isaac. When, however, Sarah

took a dislike to Ishmael she asked Abraham to send him away with his mother, and the patriarch did so, though much against his own inclination. Ishmael then grew up in the wilderness, becoming an archer, and later marrying an Egyptian wife.

(5) *Stories about Moab and Ammon* (Gen. 13:1–12; 19:1–38).—Moab and Ammon were said to be the descendants of Lot, the nephew of Abraham. The latter gave Lot the choice of the land, for they had determined to separate because their herdsmen quarreled. Lot chose the plain of the Jordan and lived for a while in Sodom, but escaped just before the destruction of that city.

(6) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—As in the previous chapter, the amount to be covered at one session will depend on the familiarity of the pupils with the patriarch stories, and is to be determined by the teacher. The aim of the chapter is to show what the Israelites thought of their relations to their neighbors, and what ideals of character they admired; also indirectly to indicate the manners and customs of the people. For a discussion of the origin, meaning, and moral value of these stories consult Peters' *Early Hebrew Story.*

Let the pupils imagine themselves sitting in a village in Palestine listening to a story-teller. If they are able to do so, let them take turns in representing this character and in narrating the stories. If any of the legends have to be omitted

do not leave out the story of the wooing of Rebekah in Gen. chap. 24. In considering the stories about any nation have its position first pointed out clearly on a map.

(7) *Notebook.*—Study Tissot's picture of the coming of Rebekah. Have the pupils paste it upon the page for the day and add an appropriate title from Gen. 24.

CHAPTER XXIV

SAUL CROWNED KING

Scripture: I Sam. 9–11

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—After the battle of Ebenezer it became evident to Samuel that if the Hebrews were to maintain their independence they must have a king to unite the tribes against the common foe. He privately chose for this position a young man named Saul, who chanced to come to him to inquire about some asses that had strayed away. Saul, after an earnest talk with Samuel about the kingship, returned quietly to his home, till the news was brought to him of an attack on Jabesh-Gilead by the Ammonites. Roused by this, he summoned his countrymen and rescued the beleaguered city, whereupon he was made king at Gilgal by the grateful Israelites.

(2) *Samuel's attitude toward the kingdom.*—The oldest record of the establishment of the kingdom is found in I Sam. 9:1–10; 11:1–11, 15. In this narrative Samuel takes the initiative in getting a king and comes to a secret understanding with Saul which encourages the latter to take the lead at the first opportunity, and Saul's successful relief of Jabesh-Gilead is the reason for his being chosen king by the people.

This old record has become imbedded in a much later version in which Saul is said to have been elected by lot at a national convention at Mizpah, while Samuel is pictured as much averse to the kingdom and as calling down rain at harvest to express his displeasure (I Sam. 8:1–22; 10:8, 17–27; 11:12–14; 12:1–25). This late idea seems to have arisen in the dark days of the kingdom, when it seemed to patriotic souls that they would have been better off without a king, and they attributed to Samuel their own attitude. This chapter is based on the older record.

(3) *Samuel as an oracle.*—In chap. 9 Samuel is represented as a sort of oracle, to whom the people came for advice, and whose predictions were reputed never to fail. Saul's servant had heard his reputation and so he proposed that they consult this "man of God" as to whether the asses had been found. The fee they intended to offer to Samuel was the fourth part of a shekel, about 14 cents. When we remember, however, that Micah's Levite got only ten shekels a year besides a suit of clothes and his keep, the fee does not seem so small, and Saul, whose father was a mighty man of wealth (I Sam. 9:1, margin) would not have offered a niggardly amount.

(4) *The sacrifice at the high place.*—This account of the sacrifice at the high place gives an interesting side-light on the customs of the times. About

thirty persons partook of the sacrificial meal, in a sort of dining-hall on the hilltop, and Samuel blessed the sacrifice and acted as master of ceremonies. At this feast Saul was made the guest of honor, though Samuel did not tell the others what he planned for this tall stranger. This practice of sacrificing at high places was later condemned as tending to idolatry, but Samuel and Saul participated in it with apparently no sense of wrongdoing.

(5) *The anointing of Saul.*—After the feast Samuel had an earnest conversation with Saul on the roof, and there Saul slept that night. In the morning Samuel called him early and escorted him to the edge of the village. Then, having sent Saul's servant ahead, Samuel anointed Saul's head with oil as a token that Jehovah had chosen him prince over Israel. He then told Saul about the men he would meet on the way home, and advised him to use his own judgment and act according as he had opportunity.

(6) *The band of prophets*—We are not to classify the prophets mentioned in I Sam. 10:5, 6, 10–13 with Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and other moral leaders of Israel. The band Saul met were much like the dervishes of today, working themselves into a frenzy and uttering ecstatic ravings which the awe-struck people supposed to come from God. Even today in that land the words "madman" and

"prophet" are nearly synonymous as they were in the time of Jehu (II Kings 9:1, 11).

Amos refused to be classified with such fellows, and that is what he probably meant when he said: "I am no prophet nor am I the son of a prophet, but I am a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore trees" (Amos 7:14).

When Saul met this band he too "prophesied," that is, he was caught by the contagion of their frenzy and imitated their antics much to the astonishment of his friends. Indeed his conduct was so strange that it gave rise to a proverb: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" (I Sam. 10:12). The further remark "And who is *their* father?" jestingly contrasts Saul, who was of an influential family (in spite of I Sam. 9:21 which simply exhibits Saul's modesty), with the nobodies with whom he here associated.

In both these instances this change in Saul is attributed to the "Spirit of God" just as later Saul's melancholy was charged to "an evil spirit from Jehovah" (I Sam. 16:14). We may perhaps recognize in Saul's susceptibility to the peculiar ecstasy of the dervishes, the beginning of the mental malady which darkened his later years.

It is possible, nevertheless, that these "prophets" were at this time exhibiting a fanatical devotion to Jehovah and were actually stimulating the patriotism of the Israelites.

(7) *The relief of Jabesh-Gilead.*—The Gileadites were willing to pay tribute or rather blackmail to buy off the Ammonites but they were unwilling to have their right eyes put out without a final effort to escape. The fact that Nahash permitted them to send messengers telling of their distress and took no precautions against surprise shows that he thought the Israelites were utterly demoralized. The messengers came to Gibeah of Benjamin where Saul lived, but did not come particularly to see him, for they did not know what Samuel had done. But the news Saul heard as he came with his oxen from the field, and the weeping of the people seem to have brought on the frenzy again, and he straightway chopped his oxen in pieces and sent them around among the tribes, summoning them to rally around him on the pain of having their cattle killed if they failed to heed the summons. The people came out as one man and messengers were sent to Jabesh-Gilead telling them that they would be delivered next day. The besieged then told the Ammonites that they would surrender the next day and thus put them off their guard. Saul's army was divided into three parts and surprised the camp of the enemy in the morning watch, that is between 2 and 6 A.M. The fight lasted till midday and the Ammonites were thoroughly scattered. The gratitude of the men of Jabesh-Gilead for this deliverance was shown long afterward when

they rescued Saul's body from the Philistines and buried it with due honor, fasting seven days (I Sam. 31:11–13).

(8) *Saul proclaimed king.*—On their return from Jabesh-Gilead the Israelites stopped at Gilgal, and, believing that in Saul they had found the best man for the position, they made him king, with sacrifices to Jehovah and general rejoicing (I Sam. 11:15).

(9) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Review Jephthah's encounter with the Ammonites. Also review the story of Samuel's early life, and the defeat of the Israelites by the Philistines at Ebenezer.

b) Tell the story of Saul's first visit to Samuel and the strange incidents of his homeward journey.

c) Tell the story of the relief of Jabesh-Gilead and the subsequent coronation of Saul at Gilgal.

(10) *Notebook.*—Discuss with the pupils the manner in which Saul became king in each of the narratives. Compare it with the way in which a man becomes president in a republic. Consider the choice by a wise man, the nomination, the election, the national crisis, the inauguration, and the popular choice. Let each pupil fill in the page for himself.

CHAPTER XXV

THE BATTLE OF MICHMASH

Scripture: I Sam., chaps. 13, 14

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—When the Philistines heard that the Israelites had chosen a king, they came up in force, and encamped in Michmash. At the sight of them the Hebrews hid themselves in caves and thickets, leaving Saul with only a handful of men. He held, however, a strong position at Geba and the enemy did not venture to attack him. They contented themselves with leaving a garrison in their camp, while the rest of the army went out foraging in three parties.

At this juncture, Saul's son Jonathan, with only one companion, attacked the garrison at Michmash and after killing twenty men put the others to flight. These spread panic through the main army, which was widely scattered and was in no position for a battle. Saul rapidly followed up his son's advantage and pursued the enemy past Beth-aven as far as Aijalon.

The day ended, however, in gloom because Jonathan had ignorantly transgressed a vow Saul had laid upon his soldiers, and his royal father would have killed him for it, had not the people ransomed him.

(2) *Preliminary movements of the armies.*—There are several places in chaps. 13 and 14 where the Hebrew text has not been well preserved and therefore it is hard to make out the meaning intended. In the first verse of chap. 13, certain numerals have been omitted so that the best we can make of it is: "Saul was . . . . years old when he began to reign, and he reigned . . . . and two years over Israel." We can only guess as to what the numbers were and as to why they were omitted.

In other verses there is considerable confusion as to the places mentioned and it is difficult to see why Saul appears in so many localities. It is generally believed that Geba and Gibeah have been confused in 13:2, 16, and that the same name should appear in both places, though not all agree as to which it should be. Both these words mean "hill," and if Geba and Gibeah were two different places they must have been very close together. The Gilgal incident is from a later source and only confuses the story.

The word translated "garrison" in 13:3 is as ambiguous as the English word "post" to which it is nearly equivalent. It may mean an actual post or pillar, or it may mean a military post, or an officer whose post was in Geba. At any rate there was at this point in Benjamin a symbol of Philistine power, whether pillar, garrison, or officer, and this was defied by Jonathan's act.

This deed, following the election of a king, brought the Philistines up in great indignation. Saul drew in his two regiments from Bethel and Michmash and concentrated his forces at Geba, which is opposite Michmash. His little army dwindled away to 600 men at the approach of the dreaded enemy. The Philistines encamped at Michmash, which Saul had just evacuated, but preferred to spoil the country rather than to attempt to dislodge Saul from his strong position. One foraging party went northward toward Ophrah (not Gideon's town, but a place in Ephraim of the same name); another party started westward toward Bethhoron, and the third went eastward toward the Jordan valley, leaving only a small garrison at the camp.

It has long been felt that 13:5 must have suffered some alteration in the text, 30,000 chariots being an incredible number for the Philistines to muster. Three hundred would probably be much nearer the truth.

(3) *Jonathan's exploit.*—Jonathan's deed in attacking a garrison with only one companion was successful because of its very audacity. He let the Philistines see him on the rock opposite their camp, and though they dared him to come up they had no idea that he would do so. The ravine is 800 ft. deep, and while he was crawling down one side and up the other he was doubtless hidden from sight,

so that when after a considerable interval, he suddenly appeared, the Philistines were taken by surprise, and were killed one by one before they could rally. Twenty of their number fell in a very short time and the rest fled in terror. According to 14:15 an earthquake happened very opportunely at this time and was a prime factor in causing the panic of the enemy.

(4) *Saul's vow.*—Saul, in his zeal to gain a great victory, sought to please Jehovah by laying a ban on food until the evening. This was a serious mistake, as the soldiers became faint before the day was over and dared not refresh themselves. Jonathan, however, had not heard Saul's orders and ate some honey which he found in the woods. That night his father discovered what Jonathan had done and was about to kill him, in spite of his affection for him, when the people interposed and ransomed the young prince who had been the hero of the day. Perhaps they provided someone else as a sacrifice to satisfy their supposedly angry God.

(5) *The ephod and Urim and Thummim.*—From this story we get some interesting details in regard to the methods used by the priests in consulting the oracle. In I Sam. 14:3 we are told that Ahijah the priest was with Saul and was wearing an ephod, which was some indispensable part of the oracle, though we cannot tell exactly what it was. Some

think it was a kind of a pocket in which the lots were kept. Another theory is that it was a sort of mask with which the priest covered his face when approaching the symbol of the Deity. The ephod is again referred to in vs. 18 (adopting the marginal reading of A.V., which is to be preferred). It seems to have been Saul's intention to consult the oracle before starting to pursue the enemy, but the situation was so critical that he did not take time to complete the inquiry.

That evening, however, when he proposed to pursue the enemy still farther, the priest suggested that the oracle be consulted, his words being "Let us draw near hither unto God" (vs. 36). For some reason he got no response. Whether he manipulated the oracle in this way intentionally, because of the slight he had received earlier in the day, we can only guess. The king, however, immediately jumped to the conclusion that the Deity was offended because of some breach of the ban and he proceeded to find the offender by means of the lot.

Vs. 41, which describes the procedure, is very obscure in the Hebrew, but the Greek version seems to preserve the original sense and reads as follows: "And Saul said, Lord God of Israel, why didst thou not answer thy servant today? If the fault be in me or Jonathan my son, O Lord God of Israel, give Urim; but if thou say thus: It is in my people Israel, give Thummim."

The Urim and Thummim evidently were the names of the two parts of the sacred lot. We cannot tell what their shape was or how they were manipulated, but the principle is the same as in our modern methods of drawing lots or tossing a coin. The result of the procedure was accepted as the utterance of God.

This time the lot happened to be Urim, which they interpreted as meaning that the fault was in Saul and Jonathan, and the latter immediately confessed that he had eaten a little honey. This Saul accounted worthy of death, and probably some victim suffered for this offense, as suggested above. We may be glad that we live in different times.

(6) *Jonathan's age.*—Many commentators have assumed that the battle of Michmash must have happened many years after Saul became king, because in I Sam. 9:2 he is called a young man while in this battle he has a grown-up son. But as the Israelite boys were expected to marry at least by eighteen, and often married before that, Saul might easily have had a full-grown son and still be called a young man, and the story in chap. 13 certainly gives the impression that it follows immediately the events narrated in chap. 11.

(7) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Review the previous chapter.

b) Describe the invasion of the Philistines and the flight of the Israelites.

c) Describe Jonathan's exploit.

d) Tell of Saul's vow and its consequences.

e) Let the pupils develop the thought that it is not by vows and ceremonies that God is pleased, but by right conduct toward one another.

(8) *Notebook*.—The picture shows the cliffs of Michmash. Have the pupils paste it upon the new page of the Notebook.

CHAPTER XXVI

STORIES OF DAVID'S EARLY LIFE

Scripture: I Sam., chaps. 16, 17

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—A mental malady began to oppress Saul, and his servants summoned a skilful harpist from Bethlehem to soothe the king with music. This man was David, the son of Jesse, a brave warrior and an attractive personality. Saul became deeply attached to him, and was much helped by his music. He even made him his own armor-bearer and sent word to Jesse that he intended to keep David at the court (I Sam. 16:14–23).

Two other stories of David's early life have been added to this narrative, one in which he is represented as being anointed at Bethlehem by Samuel, after all his older brothers have been rejected (I Sam. 16:1–13); the other in which he is pictured as killing the Philistine giant Goliath and gaining thereby fame for himself and an introduction to the king (I Sam., chap. 17).

(2) *The historical aspect of these stories.*—In reading chap. 17 of I Sam., one instinctively feels that it is not written by the same author who wrote the last part of chap. 16, or else there would have been some explanation as to how David got back to Bethlehem after Saul had decided to keep him,

and why he who had already been considered a man of war (16:18) was not in the army at the start, and why the king did not recognize his own beloved minstrel and armor-bearer (17:55–58). Another fact to be noticed is that in II Sam. 21:19 the feat of killing Goliath is ascribed to a Bethlehemite named Elhanan. (In I Chron. 20:5 an attempt has been made to harmonize these two accounts of Goliath's death by saying that Elhanan killed Goliath's brother Lahmi, but Lahmi is clearly a corruption of the Hebrew word for Bethlehemite.)

The explanation of these difficulties is that we have in I Sam., chaps. 16 and 17, accounts from two different sources of the way in which David was introduced into Saul's court. One says he was summoned because of his skilful playing on the harp; the other says that he entered Saul's court after killing Goliath. The tradition that ascribes to Elhanan the victory over Goliath is from the same source as the former of these two versions, and as the more extensive records of David's life also come from this source it is considered to be the more reliable tradition.

It is possible that after David had made a great name for himself in fighting with the Philistines, the exploit of killing Goliath was popularly ascribed to him instead of to the more obscure Elhanan. It very often happens even today that the most

prominent hero is eventually credited with the deeds of his less famous contemporaries, who are gradually forgotten.

The story of the anointing in Bethlehem is from a third source later than the other two. It is thought by some scholars to have arisen from a desire to give David the same honorable connection with Samuel that Saul had. However that may be, this story and the account of the killing of the giant have always been extremely popular, not only because of their exquisite pictures of ancient life and unchanging human nature, but also because they exemplify so well certain spiritual truths.

(3) *The anointing in Bethlehem.*—Here we have another feast at which Samuel presides. The sacrificial victim was a heifer which Samuel brought, and the guests at the meal were the elders of Bethlehem, and Jesse and his sons. Samuel saw to it that the guests were sanctified, that is that they were clean in clothes and person. It is not necessary to suppose that this required a day or two, for Saul was bidden to such a feast after the guests had assembled and certainly had no time for extensive preparation. The moral of the story is set forth in I Sam. 16:7, and has a universal application.

(4) *David as a harpist.*—Saul seems to have been very sensitive to music. His first ecstatic frenzy

was brought on by a band of dervishes who had several musical instruments with them. David, on the other hand, knew how to play music that would soothe him. Saul's further history is a study in pathology.

It is interesting to note the present David brought to Saul from Jesse—some bread, a skin of wine, and a kid. Evidently there was not much pomp about Saul's court.

All accounts agree in making David a captivating personality. A description of him is given in 1 Sam. 16:18. This should be borne in mind in the subsequent accounts of his career.

(5) *The contest with Goliath.*—Goliath was from Gath and he is said to have been six cubits and a span in height (17:4). It is very difficult to say exactly how much the Hebrew cubit was; probably it was about eighteen inches, and the span was half as much. This would make the giant 9 ft. 9 in. high. The Greek version however makes him four cubits and a span, which on the same basis would be 6 ft. 9 in. It is therefore almost hopeless to try to discover his exact stature, but he was certainly high enough to frighten the Hebrews. The tallest man of whose exact height we can be sure is Frederick the Great's Scottish giant, who measured not quite 8 ft. 3 in.

Goliath wore a helmet, a coat of mail, and greaves, all of which were of bronze. He had a

bronze javelin between his shoulders, and a huge spear with an iron head in his hand. He also wore a sword. Besides this he had a shield-bearer to carry a shield. Our ignorance of the equivalent of the Hebrew shekel here intended prevents our knowing the exact weight of this armor.

The challenge of Goliath to the Israelites to send a champion to fight with him in single combat finds many parallels in the Homeric account of battles, as well as in the annals of the Middle Ages. The preliminary exchange of curses and epithets is especially characteristic of such encounters.

The place of the combat was the valley of Elah, on the south side of which the Philistines were encamped, while the Israelites were on the north. Neither army wished to leave its strong position to attack the other, hence the long period of inactivity.

David won this fight by his fleetness of foot and his skill in the use of the sling. By the former he kept at a distance from his adversary, and the latter enabled him to fell the giant by a well-directed stone. The following description of a sling is given by Mackie:

> The shepherd's sling . . . . was made of goat-hair. The pad for the stone was a rounded, diamond shape, with a small slit in the middle so that when a stone was pressed

into it, it closed around it like a bag. . . . . In the two strings strands of white and black hair were artistically interwoven, one of them at least having an opening at the end for the fingers. Besides being used for robbers and wild animals, it did the work of the western sheep-dog, for with it the shepherd could drop a stone near a sheep lagging behind and startle it into a sense of loneliness and danger [*Bible Manners and Customs*, p. 32].

David provided himself with five smooth stones out of the brook and put them in his leather shepherd's bag in which he usually carried his food. The stones used for a sling were sometimes as big as a man's fist. We are told that David also had his shepherd's staff or club, though we are not told how he used it, if at all.

It is difficult to see how 17:54, which says that David brought Goliath's head to Jerusalem, agrees with the rest of the story, for during Saul's reign Jerusalem was still in the hands of the Jebusites and was not captured till several years later. The version which attributes to Elhanan the victory over Goliath intimates that the combat occurred during David's reign (II Sam. 21:19, 22), and in that case the giant's head may well have been brought to Jerusalem. The sword of Goliath is mentioned again in I Sam. 21:9.

(6) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Review the previous chapter.

b) Tell the story of the anointing at Bethlehem, bringing out the fact it is meant to teach, that God

is not so much pleased by a fine appearance as by willingness to obey him.

c) Tell how David became the king's minstrel and armor-bearer.

d) Tell the story of the combat with Goliath, pointing out that fights are won and difficulties overcome, not by timid idleness, but by courage and trust.

(7) *Notebook.*—Study the picture of David and have it pasted upon the new page. Help the pupils work out the details of a shepherd boy's daily life and then the details of the wonderful day of the combat with Goliath.

CHAPTER XXVII

SAUL'S ENMITY FOR DAVID

Scripture: I Sam., chaps. 18–26

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—David grew greatly in popularity at Saul's court till the king's increasing jealousy and suspicion forced him to flee for his life. He was an outlaw for the rest of Saul's reign, lived wherever he could, and often barely escaped from his royal persecutor.

(2) *Repetitions in the narrative.*—If one reads I Sam., chaps. 18–26, through at a single sitting, one notices some repetitions and a certain amount of disjointedness. For example, in 19:1, Saul is expressly said to have told Jonathan to kill David, whereas in 20:1–3, Jonathan is entirely ignorant of his father's intention. The fact is that here, as in many other parts of the early history, two traditions have been interwoven, and consequently there is some repetition and lack of unity. One tradition, which is from the same source as 16:14–23, is found in the following passages: 18:5–11, 20–30; 20:1–42; 22:1–18, 20–23; 23:1–14, 19–28; 24:1–22; 25:2–44 (in 20:1 omit the words "fled from Naioth in Ramah and," as they come from another source).

The other tradition occurs in the following places: 18:1–4, 12–19; 19:1–18*a;* 21:1–9; 23:15–18; 26:1–

25. This narrative is a continuation of chap. 17. The parallels between the two versions are as follows: 18:10–11 with 19:9–10; 20:1–42 with 19:1–7; 22:9–18 with 21:1–9; 24:1–23 with 26:1–25.

(3) *Saul throws his spear at David.*—The first intimation David had of Saul's displeasure came when the king hurled a javelin at him. David at the time was playing his harp to soothe the king, who was in a fit of melancholy. The affection Saul at first showed toward David had been turned into jealousy by the growing popularity of the young armor-bearer, and he began to suspect that David was plotting against him. This was probably a symptom of his mental malady, which frequently exhibits the delusion of fear and suspicion. Apparently he had moments when he was able to overcome his trouble and show a nobler nature (24:16–19; 26:21–25). David fortunately was able to avoid the javelin, which struck the wall instead. This incident is recorded in both traditions (18:10–11 and 19:9–10).

(4) *Jonathan's loyalty to David.*—Among the first to be captivated by David's charm was Saul's son Jonathan, and the two young men had become fast friends. When Saul's anger toward David first became known, Jonathan undertook to discover whether the royal displeasure was a passing whim or a settled attitude. Saul soon manifested other signs of his hatred and David had to flee for his life.

Both traditions record this event, but they differ somewhat in details. In one account (20:1–42) after the javelin incident, David fails to come to the king's table, and when Jonathan makes an excuse for the absentee, Saul flares up in anger and hurls his spear at his own son. Jonathan then warns David of his danger by a prearranged signal in connection with some archery practice in a field where David is hiding, and the latter hastily escapes.

In the other version (19:1–17) Jonathan sounds his father's attitude while talking with him in a field where David is hiding and Saul swears that he will not kill David. However, afterward he hurls his spear at David, and he follows this up by sending guards to watch his house, and David only manages to flee by the assistance of his wife Michal, who lets him out of a window by a rope. According to this version Jonathan later met David in the wilderness of Ziph and assured him of his own loyalty to him (23:15–18).

(5) *Michal.*—Saul's younger daughter Michal shared her brother's admiration for the harpist from Bethlehem and David won her for his wife by killing two hundred Philistines (18:20–27). She is said to have helped David to escape by lowering him from a window. She then told his pursuers that he was sick, and gave color to her story by showing them the bed in which she had placed an

image. Before the trick was detected David had made good his escape. This does not agree exactly with the account of David's flight in 20:42. Perhaps David made a subsequent visit to his wife, was discovered, and had to escape in the way described.

Later Saul compelled Michal to marry a man named Palti or Paltiel (I Sam. 25:44), and David did not have her back until seven years after Saul's death (II Sam. 3:15). (In II Sam. 21:8 Michal is confused with her sister Merab; see I Sam. 18: 17–19).

(6) *Saul takes revenge on the priests of Nob.*—In his flight David stopped at Nob, where there was a sanctuary, and met the priest Ahimelech, who had not yet heard of Saul's displeasure at his son-in-law. He therefore believed David when he said he was on an important secret mission for the king and gave him some of the holy bread and inquired at the oracle in his behalf. Saul heard of this through Doeg, an Edomite, who had charge of the royal herds. The king in his fury summoned Ahimelech and all the other priests before him, and in spite of their protestations of innocence he ordered them all to be killed. No Israelite would carry out this sentence, but Doeg performed the bloody deed and also destroyed Nob, the priests' city. One priest, however, managed to escape, and thereafter threw in his lot with David. His name was Abiathar.

It is probable that the word translated Nob is really a corruption of the word Gibeon, and that this slaughter of the priests' city at Saul's command was the act for which the Gibeonites demanded satisfaction as recorded in II Sam. 21:1–9. We know that Gibeon was an important sanctuary, and it is not likely that the destruction of this city by Saul would be wholly omitted in the account of his reign. The change of the word Gibeon into the form *NBH* which we now have in the Hebrew text might very easily occur on account of the great similarity of the Hebrew letters *G* and *N* and the resemblance of the combination *ON* to the letter *H*.

(7) *David spares Saul's life.*—In each of the two traditions there is an account of how David had a chance to kill Saul but refrained from doing so, and thereby induced the king to assume temporarily a more friendly attitude. But here again there is a divergence as to details.

One tradition tells how at Engedi Saul unwittingly entered the very cave where David and his men were hiding. David refused to kill his enemy, contenting himself with cutting off a piece of the king's robe. When Saul had started on, David called after him and showed him the piece of the robe, and thereby brought Saul back to his senses for a time (I Sam., chap. 24).

The other account locates the incident in the wilderness of Ziph, where David, accompanied only

by his nephew Abishai, came stealthily into Saul's camp at night and took the king's spear and cruse of water. Next morning he displayed these at a safe distance and persuaded Saul that his suspicions were groundless (I Sam., chap. 26).

(8) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Review chap. xxvi.

b) Tell how Jonathan became David's friend and how David won Michal for his wife.

c) Explain how, under the influence of his mental disease, Saul grew suspicious of David and threw a javelin at him.

d) Show how Jonathan was loyal to his friend in this crisis.

e) Show how Michal helped him to escape.

f) Tell the two versions of how David spared Saul's life.

g) Bring out clearly that unselfishness is the basis of true friendship. Show that David's self-control in refusing to kill Saul was better than a victory in battle. Speak of the honor that is due to rulers.

(9) *Notebook.*—Discuss with the pupils the work of the Notebook; then let them write the story for themselves.

CHAPTER XXVIII

DAVID'S STRENGTH IN THE SOUTH

Scripture: I Sam. 22:1–4; 23:1–14; 25:2–44; 27:1–12

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—During the first part of his exile, David made his headquarters at Adullam where he had a stronghold. His relatives joined him here, but on account of the danger of his position he did not let his parents remain with him but committed them to the care of the king of Moab. Debtors and other malcontents gradually flocked to Adullam till David had a band of four hundred men. With these he rescued the town of Keilah from an attack by the Philistines. Later he moved to the wilderness southeast of Hebron and gained the goodwill of the clans in those parts by protecting them from marauders. He also strengthened his position greatly by marrying Abigail, the widow of a rich Calebite named Nabal, and a woman of Jezreel named Ahinoam.

Finally he was compelled to take refuge from Saul by going to Achish, king of Gath, and he was in his service at the time of Saul's death.

(2) *The Cave of Adullam.*—Adullam is identified with the modern Aid-el-Ma which is three miles south of Socoh near which place Goliath was slain. Tradition has located David's stronghold in a

huge cave about six miles southeast of Bethlehem, but this is a mistake.

David's family came to him because they were themselves in danger of Saul's fury. The distance from Bethlehem to Adullam is about thirteen miles.

(3) *David at Keilah.*—Word reached David that the Philistines had come up and were robbing the threshing-floors at Keilah, a town not more than three miles from Adullam. He suggested to his band that they go down and rescue the Israelites. It took two favorable responses of the oracle before his men would start, but they finally followed him and defeated the Philistines and brought away a lot of their cattle. David remained in Keilah, which was a fortified town, till he heard that Saul had set out to capture him. His suspicions that the people of Keilah would give him up to the king rather than risk a siege were confirmed by the oracle, so he slipped away with his men before Saul arrived. His followers had now increased to six hundred men.

(4) *David's marriage with Abigail.*—David now moved to the wilderness southeast of Hebron. Here he protected the Israelites from Bedouin attacks, and expected some compensation in return. When, therefore, he learned that Nabal, a wealthy man of Carmel, whose flocks he had helped to guard, was having a sheep-shearing, he sent ten young men to Nabal to suggest that he give a

present to his protectors. These messengers were insulted and sent back empty-handed. David at once started down with four hundred armed men to avenge the outrage by exterminating Nabal and his family. Fortunately he was met by Nabal's wife Abigail, who offered him copious supplies and begged him to overlook her husband's offense. This David willingly did. About ten days after that Nabal died, and David made overtures of marriage to Abigail, who consented to become his wife.

Carmel, which must be carefully distinguished from Mt. Carmel, is the modern el-Kurmel and lies about seven miles south of Hebron. Here Nabal lived. He is described, however, as being a man of Maon, a place about two miles south of Carmel. Either his birthplace was Maon or his home at Carmel was considered to be in the district called the wilderness of Maon, which is referred to in I Sam. 23:24–29, as the scene of one of David's hair-breadth escapes from Saul. The wilderness of Ziph, the wilderness of Maon, and the wilderness of Engedi were all parts of the wilderness of Judah, that wild and rugged region which slopes down from the highlands of Judah to the Dead Sea.

The annual sheep-shearing was as great a festival for the shepherds as the harvest home and vintage for the farmers. At Carmel it was celebrated with

eating and drinking "like the feast of a king." Abigail did not need to prepare the presents she brought David—indeed there was no time for that—she had simply to load on asses what was already prepared for the sheep-shearers.

We are not told how long an interval elapsed between Nabal's death and Abigail's marriage to David. She no doubt observed at least the customary seven days of mourning. (Compare II Sam. 11:26.) By this marriage David allied himself with the Calebites, a branch of the Kenizzites who had settled beside the Judahites, with whom they gradually coalesced. See chap. xiii of this book.

David also took another wife from this region namely Ahinoam of Jezreel. This is not the well-known Jezreel in the plain of Esdraelon, but a town in Judah near Carmel and Maon, as we know from Josh. 15:56, though we cannot now identify the spot. The fact that David took two wives was a sign that he was becoming a chief of some importance. When he became king at Hebron he had six wives and still more when he ruled over all the tribes.

(5) *David at the court of Achish.*—Finally David decided to be entirely beyond Saul's reach by going over to the Philistines, so he came to Achish, king of Gath, with his two wives and his six hundred men. Achish received him kindly and gave him

the town of Ziklag to live in, and here he stayed a year and four months. From this center he made raids against the Amalekites and other hostile tribes, but told Achish that he was harassing the Israelites. As no one survived to tell the story of these raids, Achish believed David and held him in high favor. Ziklag remained the property of David even after he became king. It cannot now be identified.

The account in I Sam. 21:10–15 of how David played the madman at the court of Achish is from a very late source.

(6) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Review the previous chapter.

b) Describe the band that gathered round David at Adullam, and tell how he cared for his parents.

c) Tell how David delivered Keilah.

d) Tell the story of Nabal's sheep-shearing and of how Abigail became David's wife.

e) Explain why David went over to Achish and show that David was now an important chieftain of six hundred families.

f) Point out how contemptible Nabal's ingratitude was. Show how David's temper almost led him into a very wrong deed, and how "a soft answer turneth away wrath."

(7) *Notebook.*—Help the pupils in their study of the wilderness of Judea, and instruct them to paste the picture on the new page of the Notebook.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE BATTLE OF MOUNT GILBOA

Scripture: I Sam., chaps. 28, 31

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—Saul's reign ended in the gloom of defeat. The Philistines had marched northward and had encamped at Shunem in the plain of Esdraelon. Saul went to meet them and drew up his army on the north slope of Mount Gilboa. But the sight of his enemies terrified him, and as he could get no response in the ordinary oracular methods, he went to a necromancer at Endor to inquire the result of the battle. Next day the Israelites were defeated, Saul's three sons were killed, and the king, having been wounded by an arrow, ended his own life to escape the Philistines. They found his body, however, and fastened it as a trophy on the wall of Beth-shan, from which place it was rescued by the men of Jabesh-gilead and buried near their city.

(2) *The battlefield.*—The Philistines chose their own battlefield. They had had enough of fighting in the hills and narrow valleys where their chariots were useless. They therefore marched northward several days' journey along the coastal plain until they turned into the plain of Esdraelon and took up a strong position near Shunem, which is at the

southern base of the hill now popularly called Little Hermon. The eastern extension of the plain, called the valley of Jezreel, lies south of Shunem and is there about two and a half miles wide.

Saul took a position on the south side of this valley at the foot of Mt. Gilboa which rises precipitously from the plain. From the height behind his camp he had a good view of the enemy and was terrified by their numbers and their formidable appearance.

(3) *Saul gets no response from the oracle.*—The great confidence of the people in oracles and their dependence upon them is brought out again and again in the stories of Saul and David. In this attitude they resembled all their neighbors, who would not think of making war or even beginning a new enterprise without the favorable advice of an oracle. The methods employed by the Hebrews were substantially the same as those in common use in Egypt and Greece and other countries. I Sam. 28:6 mentions three methods which Saul had tried without success; dreams, Urim, and prophets.

Dreams.—It was an ancient and widespread idea that the gods communicated with men through dreams. These might come at any place, but there were particular localities where they were especially liable to occur. In Egypt there were several temples where persons came to get a communication from God in dreams. There has even come

down to us a magic formula which was supposed to be very potent in compelling a god to give a dream of the desired kind. Sometimes the dream was so plain that the dreamer could interpret it himself; at other times he had to employ a professional interpreter.

In Greece the oracle at Amphiaraus was resorted to for dreams. Here the inquirer had to abstain from wine for three days and from all food for twenty-four hours. Then he slept in the temple on the skin of a ram he had sacrificed. At Tenos there was a temple of Poseidon where the sick came to get dreams that would give them some hint in regard to the means to be used to secure recovery. A cave at Antioch was used in the same way and even Christians resorted to it as late as the time of Chrysostom.

The belief in dreams as a method of divine communication appears again and again in Hebrew history. Each of the patriarchs was credited with at least one dream where he saw the Deity. (See chap. xxii of this book.) The "call" of Samuel seems to have been a similar event, a dream where the words seemed as real as an external voice.

Saul endeavored to get a dream which would give him some suggestion as to the outcome of the campaign. We do not know what methods he used, whether he went to a shrine or used magic

formulas. We may be sure he used every method he knew, but all to no purpose.

Urim and Thummim.—This method of consulting the oracle has already been discussed (chap. xxv). This resembled many customs that were very widespread among ancient peoples. Homer tells how the Greeks at Troy shook the lots in Agamemnon's leather cap, and Pindar describes how Mopsus the soothsayer cast the sacred lots when the Argonauts started on their journey.

For some reason Saul could get no response from Urim and Thummim in this instance. Perhaps one of the lots used was a blank, which was supposed to indicate that the Deity refused to respond.

Prophets.—What is meant by these prophets has already been explained in chap. xxiv. They were ecstatics whose frenzied utterances were supposed to be due to a divine influence; the hearers interpreted them as best they could. The oracle at Delphi, the most noted in Greece, had an ecstatic priestess who was thrown into a frenzy by the gases escaping from a fissure in the earth. Her utterings while in this state were interpreted by priests who put the response into verse. This priestess was called in Greek a *prophetis*, whence our word prophet. The later prophets of Israel made the term one of great dignity, but the prophets of Saul's time were ecstatics like the modern dervishes, as is shown by the Hebrew

word for prophet, which means "one who froths at the mouth."

(4) *Saul visits the witch of Endor.*—As all the regular methods of securing a divine communication had failed, Saul resolved to use a method he had himself condemned. He bade his servants find him a woman with "a familiar spirit." They told him there was such a person at Endor, a little place on the north of the very hill on which the Philistines were encamped. Thither Saul went in disguise at night accompanied by two companions.

The method he had resolved to try was a meeting with the spirits of the dead, and the woman his servants had found was one who pretended to be able to call up the shades of the departed from their abode in Sheol. The Greeks had similar functionaries whom they called *psychagogi*. Pausanias consulted the shade of Cleonice at a temple at Heraclea near Olympia.

Though Saul was in disguise, it is not strange that he was recognized by the woman. She knew that he was in the vicinity and his height and kingly bearing, together with his request to speak with Samuel, easily disclosed his identity. The woman pretended that she saw a shade coming out of the earth. She described it as an old man covered with a robe. Saul, though he did not see the shade himself, believed that it was Samuel and made a deep bow. The woman then assumed

Samuel's voice (probably by the aid of ventriloquism, which was a regular part of her profession), and predicted defeat. This was a not very difficult forecast for one who had heard the relative strength of the two armies.

At this announcement Saul nearly fainted away, partly from fear and partly because he had fasted all day and all night. Perhaps this fasting was due simply to his worry or it may have been part of the procedure in consulting such an oracle. The woman, however, persuaded him to eat, and after his strength returned, he went away. He must have followed a round-about route in order to escape his enemies.

(5) *Saul's death.*—Next day the fight began. Every advantage was with the Philistines and they soon had the Israelites defeated. The latter could not flee on account of the steepness of the mountain behind them and they fell in great numbers. Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's three sons, were killed and the king himself was "sore wounded of the archers." He besought his armor-bearer to despatch him with a sword, and when he refused, he killed himself. Next day the victors came to strip the slain and they found the bodies of Saul and his three sons. They cut off Saul's head and sent it with his armor as a trophy to their own towns. The bodies of the dead king and his sons they fastened to the walls of Beth-shan, a

town at the eastern end of the ridge of Gilboa. Jabesh-Gilead is across the Jordan opposite Beth-shan, and the men of Jabesh, in memory of what Saul had done for them when they were besieged by Nahash the Ammonite, came up the valley of Jezreel at night and took the bodies down and buried them under a tree by their own city. Dr. Thomson tells us that there were several noisy cataracts in Beth-shan which would make it impossible for its inhabitants to hear the Gileadites while they were unfastening the bodies (*The Land and the Book*, Vol. II, pp. 193, 194).

(6) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Picture as vividly as possible the northward march of the Philistine army with its chariots and horses, archers and spearmen, and officers in shining armor.

b) Make plain the relative position of the two armies.

c) Describe Saul's visit to the witch of Endor and explain the other methods he had tried.

d) Describe the defeat and death of Saul and his sons.

e) Tell the story of the rescue of the bodies of Saul and his sons by the men of Jabesh-Gilead. Cite the gratitude of the men of Jabesh-Gilead as worthy of imitation.

f) Point out that the desire to learn the future through palmistry, phrenology, astrology, and the

other modern survivals of ancient oracles is superstitious and often does harm.

(7) *Notebook.*—Color the map, showing the extent of Saul's kingdom. Note that it included land on both sides of the Jordan but did not extend to the coast. Call attention to the location of neighboring peoples.

CHAPTER XXX

DAVID RESCUES ZIKLAG

Scripture: I Sam., chaps. 29, 30

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—When the Philistines assembled for the battle of Gilboa, David and his men marched in the rear of the army as the body-guard of Achish. The Philistine princes, however, were not sure of his loyalty and sent him home. When he got back to Ziklag, he found that the Amalekites had raided the city in his absence, and had carried off all it contained.

David started in pursuit and was fortunate enough to find an Egyptian slave who had been left behind by the Amalekites because he was sick. Guided by this man David overtook the raiders and recovered all that had been stolen from Ziklag. Of this spoil he sent presents to the chief men of the towns in southern Judah where he had been an exile.

(2) *David not allowed to accompany the Philistines.*—The deception which David had practiced on Achish had succeeded so well that that king had appointed David and his men as his bodyguard (28:2). But the kings of the other Philistine cities were not so sure of David's sincerity. They pointed out that he might be tempted to try and

regain favor with Saul by deserting the Philistines at the critical moment. They decided, therefore, that he must be sent home. When Achish told him of this decision, David pretended that he was very sorry not to be allowed to participate in the battle, though no doubt he was devoutly thankful that he did not have to fight against his own people.

Probably David was sent home before the battlefield was reached, for the Philistines would not have dismissed him at the last moment, because then it would have been too easy for him to join the Israelites. At any rate he started at daybreak and reached Ziklag on the third day.

(3) *David finds Ziklag raided.*—When David and his men reached Ziklag, they were filled with consternation to find that the city had been burned and that their wives, their children, and all their possessions had disappeared. Exasperated beyond endurance, the men fairly wept and even threatened to stone their leader. At this crisis Abiathar the priest was called and ordered to consult the oracle. A favorable response was received and the band started out to find their enemies. But before long two hundred of the men, worn out by continual marching, became too weary to go farther and stopped to rest at the brook Besor, while the others went on.

(4) *An Egyptian slave serves as a guide.*—After a while a young Egyptian was discovered lying in a

field, almost dead from hunger and sickness, and was brought to David on the supposition that he might know something about the raiders. At first he was too faint to speak, so they gave him some bread, and a piece of a cake of figs, two clusters of raisins, and some water. Then he was able to tell them that he was an Egyptian, a slave of an Amalekite, and had been abandoned by his master three days before because he had been sick, and had had nothing to eat in the meantime. He had been with the Amalekites when they burned Ziklag.

Having thus learned the identity of his enemies, David asked the Egyptian if he could show the way to the Amalekite camp, and he undertook to do so after David had sworn not to give him back to his cruel master.

(5) *The rout of the Amalekites.*—The Egyptian kept his word and they reached the Amalekite camp at the evening twilight and found their enemies spread far and wide, eating and drinking and dancing in the midst of a vast amount of plunder which they had taken from the cities of Judah and Philistia. They had shrewdly taken advantage of the absence of the warriors of both nations, and as they had met with no resistance, they had carried off everything they considered worth taking, including all the women and children. David attacked them and killed all except "four hundred young men who rode upon camels and fled."

(6) *The division of the spoil.*—The spoil taken from Ziklag was recovered intact. David found his two wives, and all the others got back the missing members of their families and all their goods. David claimed for himself the cattle which had originally belonged to the Amalekites. The rest of the plunder from Judean and Philistine cities was divided among his followers. The four hundred men who did the fighting thought that the two hundred who stayed behind ought to be content with getting back their wives and children and ought not to have any share in the spoil. David, however, decided that all should share alike and this rule was followed ever after in Hebrew warfare (30:24, 25).

When they got back to Ziklag, David's purpose in claiming the Amalekite cattle for himself became evident. He sent presents to the elders of all the towns and cities around Hebron with the message, "Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of Jehovah." Many of the places named in the list cannot now be identified. The Bethel mentioned is not the famous one by that name but another place in the region of Beersheba. This act of David's was a very politic move, as we shall see in the next chapter.

(7) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Review the previous chapter.

b) Tell why David was not in the battle of Gilboa.

c) Describe the condition in which he found Ziklag.

d) Tell the episode of the discovery of the Egyptian.

e) Tell how the Amalekites were defeated and how David divided the plunder.

f) Make clear that this kind of warfare entailed a great deal of suffering and sorrow. Point out the fairness with which David treated his men and their consequent loyalty to him.

(8) *Notebook.*—Discuss the questions in the Notebook until it is certain the pupils have something to write. Then let each fill in the page in his own way.

CHAPTER XXXI

DAVID KING AT HEBRON

Scripture: II Sam. 1:1—5:5

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—The third day after David returned to Ziklag with his rescued possessions, a messenger brought him word of the defeat and death of Saul. Thereupon David went up to Hebron and there the men of Judah anointed him as their king.

The other tribes, however, crowned Saul's son Eshbaal, who set up his capital at Mahanaim beyond Jordan. A long civil war followed in which the advantage gradually inclined to David. Finally Eshbaal was murdered by two of his officers and David was asked to become ruler of all the tribes.

(2) *The messenger and his fate.*—The messenger who brought to David the news of Saul's death came with clothes rent and earth upon his head in token of grief, but his sorrow was all assumed for he thought he was bringing David welcome tidings and expected to be handsomely rewarded for his pains (4:10). He even ventured to claim that he had killed Saul himself and produced Saul's crown and bracelet as proofs. Unluckily he admitted that he was an Amalekite, and David, remembering what he had recently suffered from the Amalekites,

and roused to anger by the effrontery of the man in claiming to have killed the king of Israel, slew the messenger on the spot.

Evidently the Amalekite had come to the battlefield to strip the slain, had found Saul's body, and taking the king's crown and bracelet, had hurried off to bring them to David. He was actuated throughout by selfish interests, but overreached himself when he invented the tale of how he had killed Saul.

(3) *The lament over Saul and Jonathan* (II Sam. 1:19–27).—This is a splendid poem of the sort one would expect from such a character as David, who was not only a minstrel but a generous warrior. David also composed a much shorter dirge upon the death of Abner (II Sam. 3:33, 34). The same spirit shown in these funeral songs is exhibited in the tender words of David at the death of his infant son (II Sam. 12:23), and over his wayward son Absalom (II Sam. 18:33).

Besides these, the Book of Psalms contains many poems which bear the caption "of David," which has usually been interpreted as meaning that David composed them. This has involved many difficulties, for some of the psalms thus attributed to him obviously do not suit his times. It is now recognized that the expression "of David" does not mean that the psalms that bear it were composed by David but that they were taken from a collec-

tion of hymns which was named for David. It therefore corresponds to the note in II Sam. 1:18, which indicates that the lament over Saul was taken from the Book of Jashar. Whether any of the psalms in the collection named for him were actually written by David is a matter of much uncertainty. A great many of them certainly were not composed by David.

(4) *David anointed king at Hebron.*—We cannot tell whether David sent his presents to the cities of southern Judah before or after he had heard of the death of Saul. At any rate it was a shrewd act and paved the way for his return to Hebron. As he had already been actual leader and protector of the tribe for some time past, the men of Judah naturally preferred him to the weak surviving son of Saul. As soon as he had become king at Hebron, David made another politic move in sending a congratulatory message to the men of Jabesh-Gilead for their kind deed in rescuing the body of Saul. This act of David's does not seem to have had any immediate effect, but the conciliatory attitude thus displayed showed its results several years later when all Israel accepted him as king.

(5) *Eshbaal made king at Mahanaim.*—The son of Saul who succeeded him on the throne is in II Samuel called Ishbosheth. In I Chron. 8:33; 9:39, however, he is called Eshbaal, and this was probably his real name. The form Ishbosheth

arose in this way. Eshbaal means "man of Baal," and when Saul bestowed this name on his son the term *Baal* which means "Lord," was freely used as an appellation of Jehovah. But later it came to be associated with heathenish rites and the Hebrews shrank from applying it to their God. On the strength of Exod. 23:13, which forbids the mention of other gods, they sometimes would not even pronounce the word *Baal* and in its place substituted *Bosheth* which means "shame." A similar change was made in the name of Jonathan's son, who is in II Sam. called Mephibosheth but whose real name was Merib-baal (I Chron. 8:34). In like manner the name Jerubbaal (Gideon) is in II Sam. 11:21 changed to Jerubbesheth. Another form in which Eshbaal's name occurs is Ishvi (I Sam. 14:49), which means "man of Jehovah," where the objectionable Baal is replaced by the proper name of the Deity.

Though Eshbaal was king in name, Abner, Saul's general, was the real ruler. The fact that Mahanaim, east of the Jordan, was made the capital instead of Gibeah shows how badly the strength of the northern tribes had been shattered by the Philistines. Eshbaal is said to have ruled two years (II Sam. 2:10), but this statement is hard to reconcile with that which immediately follows, that David reigned in Hebron over the house of Judah seven years and six months, for the story would

lead one to suppose that these two periods were practically identical.

(6) *The feud between Abner and Joab.*—The rival kings, David and Eshbaal, soon became involved in a war which lasted a good while and gradually strengthened David's position (3:1). The only details of this struggle are given in the account of a fight at Gibean (2:1–32). Here at first the issue was to be left to twelve men on each side, but as these were all killed, a general engagement followed in which Abner killed Asahel, the brother of Joab and Abishai, David's nephews. This caused a feud which resulted in Joab's stabbing Abner, in the gate of Hebron (3:27).

(7) *The kingdom reunited.*—Eshbaal quarreled with Abner and the latter at once made overtures to David, who, however, refused to see him till Michal, Saul's daughter, was returned to David. Then Abner came to Hebron and promised to bring all the tribes into allegiance to David, but before he could carry out his agreement, he was killed by Joab as above stated. Shortly after that Eshbaal was murdered by two of his officers, who took his head to David. But they were killed for their deed and hanged up "beside the pool in Hebron."

As David had now regained Saul's daughter Michal, and was the only leader competent to protect the nation from its enemies, all the tribes

which had been loyal to Eshbaal came to Hebron and asked David to be their king.

(8) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Review the story of the battle of Gilboa.

b) Tell about the messenger who brought the news to David.

c) Describe the lament of David for Saul and Jonathan.

d) Explain how for several years there were two kings.

e) Point out the generosity of David toward Saul shown in the lament for him, the treatment of the messenger who claimed to have killed him, and the message to Jabesh-Gilead. Show how David appreciated Jonathan's friendship. Show also how he won popular approval by his lament over Abner and his punishment of the murderers of Eshbaal.

(9) *Notebook.*—Read with the pupils the lament of David, and add this new page to the Notebook.

CHAPTER XXXII

DAVID EXTENDS HIS DOMINIONS

Scripture: II Sam. 5:5—12:31

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—When the Philistines heard that David had become king of all Israel, they at once invaded his territory, but were defeated so badly that they lost their images. David then besieged Jerusalem and captured it from the Jebusites, and made it his capital. Hither he brought the Ark amid great popular rejoicing. Here also he built himself a palace with the aid of Hiram, king of Tyre, who became his friend. By successful wars he gradually extended his dominions till the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, and Syrians were paying tribute to him. He manifested his former friendship for Jonathan by showing kindness to the latter's son Merib-baal, to whom he restored Saul's lands.

(2) *War with the Philistines.*—While David was reigning at Hebron the Philistines do not seem to have molested him. Probably he continued to be their vassal, for we know that he kept Ziklag, and Achish did not try to recover it as he would have done if David had declared his independence.

When, however, David became ruler of all the tribes, the Philistines saw that the old struggle

must soon be resumed, so they decided to strike at once, and came up in force into the valley of Rephaim. (There is a valley of Rephaim near Jerusalem, but we cannot be sure that it is the same one as in this story.) The account of the conflict that ensued is given in II Sam. 5:17–25, and probably the events recorded in II Sam. 21:15–22; 23:9–17 also belong to this campaign. If so the Philistines at this time captured Bethlehem and David went down to his old stronghold at Adullam. Here three of his men heard him express a wish for a drink from the well by the gate of Bethlehem and forthwith broke through the enemy's lines and brought back some water for their chief. David, however, would not drink it but poured it on the ground, saying that it was the blood of these men and hence he ought not to drink it (compare Lev. 7:26, 27).

David seems to have defeated the Philistines twice in the valley of Rephaim, and to have captured their idols. During this campaign probably occurred the incident narrated in II Sam. 21:15–17, where David became faint in battle and was nearly killed by a giant, but was rescued by Abishai. About the same time, Sibbecai slew a giant named Saph, Elhanan slew Goliath, and David's nephew Jonathan slew a giant with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. Other mighty deeds are recorded in II Sam. 23:9–12.

(3) *The capture of Jerusalem.*—One great barrier to the united action of the southern and central clans was the presence between them of the Jebusites with their fortified city Jerusalem. This David attacked and captured in spite of the confidence of the defenders. He then made it his capital, increasing its fortifications and taking up his residence in the city. This was a very important step, for Hebron was poorly adapted for a capital of the whole nation. Jerusalem had not yet belonged to any one tribe, and was therefore more acceptable to the other tribes than a place in Judah would have been.

Though the account of this undertaking precedes the record of the Philistine war, it probably followed in the actual order of events. II Sam. is not always arranged chronologically.

Hiram, king of Tyre, now became his friend, which was a testimony to his growing power and importance. Hiram sent masons and carpenters to David to assist him in building a house for himself, and also supplied him with cedar wood from the Lebanon Mountains.

(4) *The Ark brought to Jerusalem.*—David further enhanced his new capital by placing the Ark there. This sacred symbol of Jehovah, after being sent back by the Philistines, had remained at Kiriath-jearim, or Baal-Judah, in the house of Abinadab. It was now placed on a new ox-cart

driven by Abinadab's sons Uzzah and Ahio, and started toward Jerusalem, accompanied by the king and a great many of his people. At the threshing-floor of Nacon the oxen stumbled and Uzzah, in an attempt to steady the Ark, suddenly fell dead. This event, interpreted as a divine judgment on Uzzah, so terrified the people that the procession halted and the Ark was carried into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite, where it remained three months. From there it was finally taken to Jerusalem, and set up in a tent with many sacrifices and great rejoicing, all the people receiving presents of food from the king.

In his great enthusiasm for Jehovah, David had appeared on this occasion in very scanty attire, and had danced before the Ark with all his might. Michal saw this from her window and later taunted him on his unseemly conduct. David replied harshly, boasting that Jehovah had chosen him instead of her father, and declaring that he would do as he pleased in honoring his God. The people considered Michal's childlessness as a judgment of Jehovah upon her for her conduct at this time.

Michal, however, really deserves a great deal of pity. She had fallen in love with David when he first came to court and had been his affectionate wife. But while David was in exile her father married her to Paltiel, with whom she lived for many years and probably very happily, for Paltiel

was much distressed when he had to give her up (II Sam. 3:16). When Michal was sent back to David, she found herself only one of several wives and concubines, many of whom on account of their children were more honored than herself, and she had reason to believe that David wanted her only because she was Saul's daughter and thus a political asset. No wonder her soul was sometimes bitter.

(5) *David's conquests.*—David gradually extended his dominions by successful wars against foreign kings. He defeated the Moabites and treated them with great cruelty and compelled them to pay tribute. Edom also became tributary, and garrisons were placed throughout their land (8:14).

David also defeated Hadadezer, king of Zobah, and captured from him rich spoil of chariots and gold and brass, part of which was dedicated to Jehovah. By this victory he gained the friendship of Toi, king of Hamath, who sent his son Joram to Jerusalem with presents of silver and gold. These also were consecrated to Jehovah.

An insult to David's envoys by the king of Ammon brought on a serious war. The Ammonites hired men from Zobah, which had recently been at war with David, and from three other small Syrian kingdoms, namely Rehob, Tob, and Maacah. The allies suffered a defeat at the hands of Joab,

but this only roused the Syrians to fresh activities. They augmented their forces with troops from beyond the Euphrates, yet they were beaten so badly at Helam that they did not renew the struggle. The Ammonites were thus left to their fate and were quickly subjugated. Rabbah, their capital, was captured and sacked, and the inhabitants were treated with great severity. In the spoil taken from Rabbah was a crown studded with gems. This was set on David's head.

It would seem also that those Canaanite cities which had hitherto held out against the Israelites, succumbed to David, for we know that they were included in Solomon's commissary districts.

In short, David subjugated the Moabites, Edomites, Ammonites, and Canaanites and exacted tribute from them. The Philistines and certain Syrian kings were crushingly defeated by him, but we do not know that David had any effective suzerainty over them. The king of Tyre was his friend, and the king of the Syrian kingdom of Geshur was his father-in-law.

(6) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Review the previous chapter.

b) Describe the defeat of the Philistines, telling the story of how three soldiers brought David a drink from the well of Bethlehem.

c) Describe the capture and fortification of Jerusalem and explain the importance of the event.

d) Tell how the Ark was brought to Jerusalem. Mention the palace which was built for David by the king of Tyre.

e) Show how David gained the ascendancy over all the enemies of his people and raised his kingdom to a position of great importance.

f) Speak of David's love for his early home as evidenced by his desire for a drink from Bethlehem and show how considerate he was toward the men who brought him the water he craved.

(7) *Notebook.*—Color the map, showing the extent of the kingdom of David and Solomon. Compare with the map of the kingdom of Saul.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE REBELLION OF ABSALOM

Scripture: II Sam., chaps. 13–20

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—Ammon, David's eldest son, was killed by his half-brother Absalom for an outrage done to the latter's sister, and the murderer fled to his grandfather Talmai, king of Geshur. There he remained three years, till Joab induced David to allow him to return. He had to wait, however, two years after he got back before he was received by his father.

Then Absalom began to plot against his father and finally proclaimed himself king at Hebron. David was taken entirely by surprise and was forced to flee across the Jordan to Mahanaim. Absalom entered Jerusalem soon after, but was rather slow in crossing the Jordan, and meanwhile David had collected an army which easily defeated the rebels. Absalom in fleeing from the battle was caught by the head in the boughs of a tree and was killed by Joab, much to the grief of the king.

The tribes then outvied each other in showing loyalty to David, and the jealousy that ensued between Judah and the other tribes led to another brief rebellion which ended in the death of Sheba, its chief instigator.

(2) *The feud between Ammon and Absalom.*—David was very indulgent toward his sons and they were in consequence badly spoiled. His oldest son was Ammon, whose mother was Ahinoam of Jezreel, while his third son was Absalom, born of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur. These two became involved in a feud because Ammon had outraged Absalom's sister Tamar. When two years had passed and David had done nothing to punish Ammon, Absalom, took matters into his own hands. He invited all the king's sons to a sheep-shearing at his home in Baal-hazor, and while they were feasting there, his servants killed Ammon. The other princes fled in a panic and Absalom escaped to Geshur.

(3) *Absalom's Personality.*—Absalom was reputed to be the handsomest man in all Israel. "From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him" (14:25). He had luxuriant hair which was cut once a year and weighed two hundred shekels. In character Absalom was very proud and wilful. On his return from Geshur, Joab would have no dealings with him, so he sent his servants to burn Joab's barley field, and thus got an interview with Joab. After being reconciled to his father he assumed great splendor, providing himself with a chariot and horses and fifty men to run before him. Finally his act in rebelling against his indulgent

father showed him lacking in gratitude and filial reverence.

(4) *Minor characters of the story.*—The story of Absalom's rebellion is remarkable for the number of minor characters introduced. The following is a partial list:

A wise woman of Tekoa, at Joab's instigation, went to David and by an invented story induced him to recall Absalom from Geshur.

Ahitophel, the Gilonite, was one of David's counselors, but joined Absalom. When, however, the latter refused to follow his advice, he went to his home in Giloh and hanged himself.

Ittai the Gittite, was the captain of a band of six hundred Gittites who were in the service of David and insisted on accompanying him. He was given command of a third part of David's army in the subsequent battle against Absalom.

Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, brought the Ark out of Jerusalem at the time of David's flight, but he sent them back saying that if God favored him he would return and see the Ark; if not, he was willing to accept God's will.

Hushai, the Archite, was an old friend of David's who met him at the top of the Mount of Olives. The king was barefoot and had his head covered and wept as he went. Hushai's coat was rent in token of grief and there was earth upon his head. At David's request he returned to Jerusa-

lem, and when Absalom arrived he pretended to join the rebellion. He advised Absalom not to pursue David immediately, and at the same time sent a secret message to David to hurry on. Absalom followed his advice, and thus offended Ahitophel.

Ziba met David a little beyond the top of the hill, bringing with him a couple of asses loaded with two hundred loaves of bread, and a hundred clusters of raisins and a hundred of summer fruits and a skin of wine. He was a former servant of Saul's whom David had ordered to cultivate Saul's lands for the benefit of Jonathan's son Merib-baal (Mephibosheth). As he gave these presents to the king he declared that his master had joined the rebellion, and David at once gave him Merib-baal's possessions.

Shimei, a relative of Saul, lived in Bahurim and cursed David as he passed by, saying, "Begone, begone, thou man of blood, and base fellow," and threw stones and dust at him. Abishai wanted to kill him, but David restrained his impetuous nephew. When the king returned in triumph, Shimei met him and implored his forgiveness, which was generously granted. Shimei was put to death by Solomon (I Kings 2:36–46).

Ahimaaz and Jonathan.—The former was the son of Zadock the priest and the latter was Abiathar's son. They acted as messengers between Jerusalem and David, and in carrying a despatch

they were seen and pursued. They managed to hide in a well in the courtyard of a man in Bahurim until their pursuers gave them up. Later Ahimaaz carried the news of the battle to David but did not tell him of Absalom's death.

Shobi, Machir, and Barzillai brought David and his followers many supplies of furniture and food on their arrival at Mahanaim. When David returned to his capital, Barzillai accompanied him across the Jordan and the king invited him to come and live with him in Jerusalem. But as he was eighty years old he begged off and sent his son Chimham instead.

The Cushite was a slave who was sent from the battlefield to bear tidings to David. He told him of Absalom's death.

Merib-baal (Mephibosheth) met David on his return with many tokens of grief. He explained that Ziba had maligned him, for he had fully intended to follow David but was unable to do so on account of his lameness and Ziba had taken the donkey he intended to ride. David told him to divide the land with Ziba, and although this seems hardly just, the answer of Merib-baal was most generous: "Yea let him take it all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come in peace unto his own house" (II Sam. 19:24–30).

Sheba, a Benjamite, started a second rebellion when the men of Judah got ahead of the other

tribes in bringing David back. Sheba was pursued by Joab and Abishai to the extreme north of the country and took refuge in Abel-beth-maacah. Here a "wise woman out of the city" persuaded the inhabitants to save themselves by throwing Sheba's head over the wall.

Amasa was the son of David's sister and was appointed Absalom's commander-in-chief. After the collapse of the rebellion David offered to give him Joab's position. But he was slow in gathering the men of Judah to put down Sheba's rebellion, and Joab was ordered to pursue the rebel. Amasa met Joab at Gibeon and was stabbed there by Joab and died.

(5) *David's character.*—The story of Absalom's rebellion illustrates very well the strength and weakness of David's character. The whole trouble began in his indulgence toward his sons, and he could not bear to use harsh methods toward Absalom even when the latter was in open rebellion.

His personal charm was attested by the way Ittai followed him though under no obligation to do so. His faith was shown in sending the Ark back to Jerusalem: his wisdom in his orders to Husha and to the sons of the priests. He showed great forbearance and generosity toward Shimei, and gratitude and courtesy toward Barzillai. Even in his grief for Absalom he went down from his room where he had been weeping and sat in the

gate that the people might know that he appreciated their services. His messages to the men of Judah and to Amasa showed great tact, while the popular opinion of his value to the nation was expressed in the words, "The king delivered us out of the hand of our enemies and he saved us out of the hand of the Philistines." His failure, however, to punish Joab for his murders showed an unfortunate weakness.

(6) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Review the previous chapter.

b) Tell the story of Absalom's rebellion as graphically as possible.

c) Use the various persons in the narrative as illustrations to show how character is revealed in sudden crises. Find out which persons in the story the pupils admire and why.

d) Compare the story of Absalom with the parable of the Prodigal Son, pointing out resemblances and differences. Show in what respects the affection of David for Absalom may be taken as a type of God's love for us.

(7) *Notebook.*—Have the pupils paste in the picture of a city gate, and note how the life of an ancient city centered at this place. Help them to decide on the important events in each reference given in the Notebook.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE REIGN OF SOLOMON

Scripture: I Kings, chaps. 1–11

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—When David was old his fourth son, Adonijah, attempted to usurp the throne with the aid of Joab and Abiathar. But David had promised his wife Bathsheba that her son Solomon should be king and now abdicated in his favor. Adonijah was spared at first, but was afterward killed by the new king, who quickly gained a great reputation for prudence.

Early in his reign Solomon allied himself with Egypt by marrying Pharaoh's daughter, for whom he built a palace. He also adorned his capital with many other fine buildings, chief of which were a temple, dedicated in the eleventh year of his reign, and an extensive palace for himself. His buildings and fortifications in other parts of his dominions were very numerous. In these enterprises he was assisted by Hiram, king of Tyre.

(2) *Adonijah's rebellion.*—Adonijah followed the example of his brother Absalom whom he resembled in several ways. He was handsome and popular and stood well with his father. He therefore believed that there would be little opposition to his becoming king, so he prepared chariots and

horsemen for himself, and, with the aid of Joab and Abiathar, planned to have himself proclaimed king at a great feast at Enrogel.

But the plot was frustrated by Nathan the prophet, and by Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, who informed David of what Adonijah was doing and induced him to abdicate in favor of Solomon. The latter was then placed upon David's own mule and escorted to Gihon by the royal bodyguard, and was there anointed king by Zadok the priest. Adonijah's rebellion collapsed and he and Joab ran to the altar and took hold of the horns projecting from it hoping to escape punishment in such a sacred place. Adonijah was promised his life on condition of good behavior, but Joab was killed even at the altar. Abiathar was banished to his estate in Anathoth for his part in the conspiracy. After David's death Adonijah was imprudent enough to ask for Abishag, one of his father's concubines, and Solomon interpreted this as the first step in a new plot and had him put to death forthwith.

These events cannot be judged by western standards. Though Adonijah was older than Solomon, he had no claim to the kingdom on that account, for it was recognized that the king had the right to name his successor. Compared with other eastern monarchs, who usually began their reigns by a general murder of all other possible claimants to the throne, Solomon was particularly

mild and forbearing. Joab, at least, deserved his fate because he had murdered Abner and Amasa.

(3) *Solomon's judgment.*—One of the early acts of Solomon was a pilgrimage to Gibeon, where he offered a thousand burnt-offerings. Here he had a dream in which God appeared to him and asked him what he would like to have. Solomon expressed a wish for "an understanding heart" to enable him to deal justly with his people. God was so well pleased with this choice that he promised him not only wisdom but also riches and honor.

Shortly after this an incident occurred which led people to believe that Solomon had received the request made in his dream. Two women came to him to settle a dispute. They lived both in the same house, and each had a child, but one baby had died in the night and both women claimed the living one. Solomon called for a sword and ordered the living child to be divided in two and half to be given to each. In this way he discovered the real mother, for she revealed herself by saying she would rather have the child given to the other woman than see him killed, while the other woman received Solomon's order with complacence. Solomon gave the child back to his mother and the fame of the event spread throughout the nation.

(4) *Solomon's foreign policy.*—David had raised his kingdom to such importance that his son was

able to arrange a marriage alliance with Pharaoh's daughter, who brought as her dowry the Canaanite city of Gezer. She was Solomon's chief wife and for her he built a palace which was probably the first building he erected. This alliance was only temporarily advantageous, for in the time of Solomon's son Rehoboam, Judah was invaded by the Egyptians. It is thought that the Pharaoh who gave his daughter to Solomon was one of the last, if not the very last, of the Tanite Pharaohs, and that a change in dynasty in Egypt accounted for the change in attitude to the house of David.

David's friendship with the Tyrians was continued by his successor. The Hiram we read of in Solomon's time seems to have ascended the throne about the same time that Solomon began to reign, and was probably a son or grandson of David's friend by the same name. From Tyre Solomon got the cedar and fir timber for his buildings, skilled workmen to assist him in the undertakings, and a considerable quantity of gold. In return he gave Hiram 20,000 measures of wheat (a measure in this case was equal probably to a large cask or hogshead), and 20 measures of fine oil. He also gave him twenty cities in Galilee, but Hiram was not very well pleased with these. Solomon's other commercial ventures will be considered in the next chapter.

(5) *Solomon's temple.*—**Time and Place.**—In the fourth year of his reign Solomon began to build a

temple on the hill in Jerusalem called Mt. Moriah. Seven years later the building was dedicated. A great deal of labor was expended in preparing the foundations of this edifice. The top of the hill was leveled off and the sloping sides built up, the whole work being a great undertaking. Some of the stones used in this work were enormous.

Workmen.—To carry out this enterprise Solomon raised a levy of 30,000 Israelites and sent them to the Lebanon mountains 10,000 at a time. For each month spent there they were allowed two months at home. Besides these Solomon forced the Canaanites and other subject people to work for him; 80,000 of them were hewers in the mountains and 60,000 "bare burdens." Over these there were 3,300 overseers. With Sidonian woodcutters to direct the work, cedar and fir trees were felled, carried to the Phoenician coast, and floated by sea in large rafts to Joppa, whence they were taken to Jerusalem.

The stone for the building was cut at the quarries by Israelite workmen assisted by Tyrians and Gebalites (men from Gebal in Phoenicia). This was done so carefully that "there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house."

Dimensions and Plans.—The dimensions of the temple were small. The most sacred part, called the *oracle* or *holy of holies*, was a cube in form, each

side measuring 20 cubits (30 ft.). In front of this was a room called the *holy place*, which was 40 cubits long (60 ft.), 20 cubits wide (30 ft.), and 30 cubits (45 ft.) high. At the entrance to this room, which faced the east, there was a porch which extended 10 cubits (15 ft.) in front of the building. The height of this porch is in II Chron. 3:4 given as 120 cubits (180 ft.), but this is obviously a mistake, as it is out of all proportion to the rest of the building. On either side of this porch was a pillar of brass 18 cubits (27 ft.) high, surmounted by a capital 5 cubits high ($7\frac{1}{2}$ ft). The circumference of each pillar was 12 cubits (18 ft.).

On the other three sides of the building were small rooms arranged in three stories, each story being 5 cubits high. The temple was lighted by latticed windows in the part that projected above the side chambers.

Furniture and Decorations.—The temple was finished on the inside with cedar and fir wood, carved with palm trees and flowers and cherubim, and overlaid with gold. The oracle contained the Ark and two winged cherubim or griffins that stretched their wings over it. The oracle had two folding doors of olive wood. These stood open, and golden chains were stretched across the entrance. The holy place contained a small altar for incense, a table for shewbread, and ten candlesticks. The doors of the holy place were made of fir wood.

In the court of the temple there was a huge laver ten cubits in diameter, resting on twelve oxen, three of which faced toward each point of the compass. This was for the priests to wash in. Then there were ten smaller lavers of brass, five on each side of the temple for washing the sacrifices. Besides these there was an altar on which the burnt offerings were consumed. There were in addition many pots and shovels and other utensils.

(6) *Solomon's palace.*—The thirteen years that followed the dedication of the temple Solomon spent in erecting a palace for himself. The buildings when completed were very extensive and consisted of apartments for the king, for the daughter of Pharaoh, and for the other members of the royal harem, and of a porch of judgment where the king's throne stood, together with various other porches.

(7) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—

a) Review the previous chapter.

b) Tell the story of Adonijah's usurpation and of Solomon's coronation.

c) Tell the story of Solomon's judgment.

d) Tell of Solomon's alliances with Egypt and Tyre.

e) Describe the temple of Solomon and his palace.

f) Present the teaching of Christ in John 4:21–24, and discuss with the class its meaning.

(8) *Notebook.*—Make the model of Solomon's temple. Cut along the heavy lines, except the windows, and capitals of pillars. Fold along the dotted lines. Remember that in front there is a porch as well as a front wall, and the work will not be difficult.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE LIFE OF THE PEOPLE IN THE TIME OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

(1) *Summary of the chapter.*—During the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon the tribes were united as never before. The ascendancy they gradually gained over their neighbors, the growing splendor of the new capital, the fame of their kings, and the pomp of the court brought about a more distinct national self-consciousness while the contact with other nations, especially with the Phoenicians, led to the widening of their horizon and the beginning of foreign commerce. The great undertakings of Solomon, however, involved forced labor, an innovation much disliked by the people and one that was largely responsible for the division of his kingdom under Solomon's successor.

(2) *Changes in the form of government.*—With the establishment of the monarchy the Israelites were gradually welded into one state, and came to think more of the nation and less of their tribal organizations. In Solomon's time the land was divided into twelve commissary districts which had little resemblance to the old tribal divisions. As power became centralized in the hands of the king the people were left with very little voice in the

government, though the method of rebellion was always open to them when conditions became intolerable. Mercenary soldiers were introduced by David and became a strong prop for the throne.

(3) *The pomp of the court.*—Life in Saul's court seems to have been comparatively simple, though it was probably more stately than anything previously known in Israel. In his reign we first read of the "king's table" where certain courtiers were expected to appear at least on stated occasions, and from which absence without excuse was considered a serious offense. In Solomon's time this had become so large an institution that the quantity of provisions required for a single day was enormous (I Kings 4:22, 23).

Saul seems to have had only one wife and one concubine, but David had a large harem and Solomon is credited with an almost incredible number of wives and concubines.

David had a Tyrian palace built for himself in Jerusalem, but this was entirely eclipsed by the royal buildings of his son, whose magnificent throne and lavish use of gold gave rise to the proverbial expression, "Solomon in all his glory."

David was content to ride a mule, but his son Absalom had a chariot and horses, and fifty men to run before him. Adonijah followed his example, while Solomon introduced chariots and horses quite extensively. He had fourteen hundred

chariots and twelve thousand horsemen. Part of this force he kept at Jerusalem and the rest he stationed in the "chariot cities." This was regarded by the conservatives as a wicked innovation, but it was really an improvement.

(4) *The Phoenician alliance.*—The friendship between the Israelites and Tyrians was of much importance, for the latter were the great commercial people of the Mediterranean and they were therefore especially well fitted to broaden the ideas of the Israelites and to impart to them the arts of civilization. As both people spoke the same language this was not a difficult matter. The aid given by the Tyrians in erecting the royal buildings, at Jerusalem taught the Israelites forestry and masonry. More important than this was the part they took in introducing the Hebrews to commerce, an occupation in which they became more and more proficient until now they have almost wholly abandoned agricultural pursuits.

In chap. xiii it was pointed out that the Canaanite cities on the great trade routes withstood the Israelites for a long time. They were subjugated however, during this period, and the great caravan routes between the valley of the Nile and the valley of the Euphrates came thus under Hebrew control. Solomon protected the trade that flowed along these highways and took part in it himself. The "king's merchants" imported Egyptian horses

and chariots and sold them for large sums to the Hittite and Syrian kings (I Kings 10:28, 29).

Solomon also took advantage of his seaports. The conquest of Edom by David had opened to the Israelites the port of Ezion-geber on the Gulf of Akabah, which is an extension of the Red Sea. Here Solomon built a fleet for which Hiram furnished seamen. This fleet sailed to Ophir (which we cannot now identify) and brought back large quantities of gold, almug trees, and precious stones (I Kings 9:26–28; 10:11–12). We cannot be sure whether the notice in I Kings 10:22 refers to this fleet or to a second fleet on the Mediterranean. We are told that Solomon had at sea a "navy of Tarshish," which sailed with the navy of Hiram, and came home every three years loaded with gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks. Tarshish was a Mediterranean port, but we cannot tell its exact location. It has been identified with such widely separated places as Tarsus in Asia Minor and Tartessus in Spain. The term "navy of Tarshish" was not, however, confined to Mediterranean fleets, as is evident from I Kings 22:48. Apparently any large ship was called a "Tarshish ship," just as in modern times the word "East-Indiaman" denoted a certain type of vessel, and not necessarily the destination of the ship to which the name was applied.

Whether or not Solomon had a Mediterranean

fleet, we know that he utilized the port of Joppa. This port was used as the landing-place of the timber sent down in rafts from Phoenicia.

(5) *The visit of the Queen of Sheba.*—The voyages of the Hebrew ships spread far and wide the fame of Solomon's wisdom and splendor. As a result, the Queen of Sheba came to Jerusalem to see if all she had heard about him was true. She brought with her a very great train, with camels bearing presents of spices and gold and precious stones. She went home declaring that the half had not been told her (I Kings 10:1–10). Sheba seems to have been in Arabia.

(6) *The effect on the people.*—Though the effect of these changes and conditions on the people is not dwelt upon in the Bible records, it must have been very great. They could scarcely help being deeply impressed with their own national importance for it was visibly symbolized to them in the splendid buildings at Jerusalem, the fortifications in different parts of the land, the pageantry of the royal chariots and horses, and the long processions of foreign tribute-bearers and other visitors who came to their capital. The enterprises of these times took thousands of Israelites outside of their own country and brought them in contact with other peoples and we may be sure that in this process their ideas were broadened, their prejudices

were softened and they saw how their own customs and institutions could be improved.

(7) *Suggested treatment of the chapter.*—This chapter is designed to afford an opportunity for a general review of the whole course. The completed Notebook will afford valuable assistance.

a) Tell the story of the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Jerusalem, explaining that she came out of curiosity to see the splendor of Solomon of which she had heard from his sailors. Then describe Solomon's glory and the commercial enterprises on which the Israelites embarked under his guidance.

b) Compare the prosperity of this period with the bondage in Egypt (chap. i), with the desert life (chap. vi), and with the early days in Canaan (chap. xxi).

c) Review briefly the steps by which they gained political independence: the escape from Egypt (chap. v), the battle in the desert (chap. vii), the invasion of Canaan (chaps. xi, xii, xiii), the conflicts in the time of the judges (chaps. xiv, xv, xvii, xviii), and the wars of Saul and David (chaps. xxiv, xxv, xxix, xxxii).

d) Review the story of the covenant at Sinai (chap. viii) and trace the fortunes of the Ark, comparing the Tent of Meeting (chap. ix) with the sanctuary at Shiloh (chap. xx) and the temple at Jerusalem (chap. xxxiv).

e) Run over the following list of worthies, mentioning the chief deeds of each: Moses, Joshua, Barak, Deborah, Jael, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, Samuel, Saul, Jonathan, David, and Solomon.

f) Point out that in the period covered by this course there was continual progress, not only in outward prosperity, national unity, and international importance, but also in morals and religion. For the administration of justice by the king was a vast improvement over the times when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes"; while the positions assumed by the prophets Nathan and Ahijah and the attention paid to them, were evidences that the conscience of the nation was growing more acute.

g) Raise the question as to whether that growth has continued down to the present day.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following is a short list of the books likely to be most helpful to teachers using this course.

1. BIBLE DICTIONARIES

Hastings: *Dictionary of the Bible*, 5 vols.
The Jewish Encyclopedia.

2. INTRODUCTIONS TO THE BIBLE

McFadyen: *An Introduction to the Old Testament.*
Peters: *Early Hebrew Story, Its Historical Background.*
Gunkel: *The Legends of Genesis.*
Houghton: *Telling Bible Stories.*
Kent: *The Student's Old Testament*, Vol. I; *Narratives of the Beginnings of Hebrew History.*

3. HISTORIES OF THE ISRAELITES

Kent: *A History of the Hebrew People*, 2 vols.
Smith, H. P.: *Old Testament History.*

4. COMMENTARIES

NOTE: There are very few reliable and up-to-date commentaries in English on the historical books of the Old Testament. In general it is best to refer to articles in the Bible Dictionaries.

Driver: *The Book of Genesis*, with introduction and notes.
Bennett: "The Book of Joshua," in *Sacred Books of the Old and New Testaments* (*Polychrome Bible*).
Moore: *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges.*
Smith, H. P.: *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel.*

5. BOOKS ON THE RELIGION OF THE HEBREWS

Budde: *Religion of Israel to the Exile.*
Smith, W. R.: *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites.*
Curtiss: *Primitive Semitic Religion Today.*
Kautsch: "Religion of Israel," in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. V.
Robertson: *Early Religion of Israel.*

6. EGYPT

Erman: *Life in Ancient Egypt.*
Breasted: *A History of Egypt.*
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